BING

Alone, he changed the sound of popular song

1975

Ken Barnes at Leeds SPECIAL

Edited by REG

Bristo

INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

NO 40

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Official organ of
THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE:

BING

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MEMBERS WILL NOTE THE INCREASE IN SUBSRIPTION TO £1.80p: This has become essential to try and offset continually rising costs. For instance, it now costs a minimum of 44p per year to send each magazine out per member. And that is, of course, before a single letter is written! Postage is the heaviest and most grievous burden....

Members will have been gratified at the alacrity with which the BBC made A COUPLE OF SONG AND DANCE MEN the "album of the week" between Nov. 24-28!

A late piece of news from Frank Hatwell (Birmingham) is to the effect that Michael Parkinson's new book, dealing with the guests he has "entertained" on his TV programme deals with Bing first. The book isn't yet to hand but Frank says it contains a really fine picture of Bing - and this can be obtained, or copies of it 10 x 8, from a Mr. David Evans, 7 Eastcote House, East Street, EPSOM, Surrey.....the price? £1.50p.

Further on you will read of the many publications that have carried stories about Bing and his visit. Yet another appears in FILMS and FILMING, December issue. It is by our new-found friend ALAN WARNER of United Artists. And when you hear it begins: "If some singers appear less than forthcoming in terms of self-appraisal, Bing Crosby wins the modesty stakes hands down. He regularly assesses his career along the lines of being in the right place at the right time, paying little or no regard to the enormity of his individual talent as a unique vocalist both in style and pure timbre. 1975 has indeed been Bing Crosby's year....in fact, he celebrated his 50th year as an entertainer by working meticulously in this country both on recordings and numerous interviews plus some major television appearances....." you know it is going to be authentic and interesting.

JOHN BASSETT, 72 Stromness Road, SOUTHEND-on-SEA, ESSEX, SS2 4JQ is handling discographical matter and studies for the ICC and will appreciate material on the subject.

Printed and produced for the members of the ICC by REG BRISTO, 7, Greenmeadow Close, CWMBRAN, GWENT, NP4 3NR.

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EDITORIAL

As you read this the wonderful Crosby year of 1975 is in its last days....we have no need to state here what it has meant, for this issue, indeed, all the issues of BING throughout this year have endeavoured to report - and reflect - what it has meant to all of us. For now, we are privileged to pass on to every individual member of the ICC the following message at this particular time from Bing himself:

"Its always a great pleasure to take advantage of this opportunity to wish the members of the ICC a Merry Christmas. I understand this message is going to be in the December issue of the BING magazine, so I have to hurry and get this cassette in the mail so that it can be typed and set up for publication.

As always, I want to wish you a very happy, jolly and Holy Christmas, but more than that, I hope that the New Year brings England and the British Isles a settlement of their manifold problems. It really is unfortunate that a great nation like England should be so harassed by the irritating and crushing problems that have asailed it in the past couple of years. No other country could stand up, I don't think, with equanimity to such a barrage, but the English have always shown a great capacity for stoicism and to endure travail. I do hope that the New Year brings some relief - they're entitled to it; and I hope that the New Year is a good one for all the ICC members, too.

We're going to do our regular Christmas Show in about ten days. We have only a couple of guests - Fred Astaire and the Young Americans. The rest will be the family. The show is being put together by Gary Smith and Dwight Hamian who have been in England for four or five years doing some of the big spectaculars that we see over here with people like Liza Minelli, Sammy Davis, Burt Bacharach and Ann Margaret to name but a few. They're tremendously talented and we think we're going to have a nice show. It looks very good at this point and what is even more pleasant is the knowledge that it will be released in England at Christmas time, and I hope you all get to see it and like it. My very best wishes to everyone.

BING CROSBY.

Compassionate and understanding from Bing, ringing with his usual sincerity. We are very glad to have it and in in return we do, all of us, wish Bing and his family precisely the type of happy, jolly, Holy Christmas Bing desires - and may 1976 prove happy and successful - and we find Bing over here again helping us to get over our "blues"!

And from the ICC to all members - from Bert Bishop, Bob Roberts, John Bassett, Eric Crowder, Edw. Hale, Keith Parkinson, Leslie Gaylor and assuredly yours truly, A HAPPY CHRISTMAS and a bumper new Year.

Among the many new readers who will be reading this issue we are delighted to welcome: Barrie Brooks (Bristol) and we hope this is indeed the surprise daughter Cathy expects! Mr. A.F.Brueton (Staines); Don Carr (Bolton); little Dena Curtis (Bournemouth); David Cheshire (Grays); Geoff Chappells (Leek); Bryan Collins (Norwich); Wilf Coombs (Merthyr) John Downey (Belfast); Len Ennis (Barrow); Syd Gifford (Grimsby); May Hamer (Bury); Jim Houghton (Wirral); Frank Hatwell (welcome back!); Harold Hanke (Birmingham); S.A. Hines (Colchester); Michael Holmes (Chiswick High Rd.); John Kirby (W. Germany); Dennis (Dixie) Lee (Halstead); John Minton (Bolton); John Mills (Cardiff); F.J.Murdoch (Kilmarnock); Doreen Mitchell (Pinner); Mrs. J. Mason (Brighton); John Milne (Corby); Andrew Mangan (Dublin); Margaret McCune (Port Glasgow); Ron Newton (Telford); M.O'Donoghue (Ilford); Joe Parker (Ayr); P.U.D.Put (Holland); Stuart Parry (Manchester); L. Roy (Buxton); Andrew Rodgers (Glasgow); Edw. Sturrup (Sunbury); L. Smith (Weston); Jean Spencer (Hemel Hempstead); Frank Thomas (Machynlleth) and Frank Tarran (Australia).

SPECIAL THANKS TO BERT MORTON FOR PICTURE(S) - AND A SPECIAL WISH FOR A GOOD CHRISTMAS FROM KEN BARNES!

AN AUTUMN DAY IN LEEDS

The Editor:

Not, you may well think, an entirely ravishing prospect! But wait... by common consent we had a lovely autumn this year - even those who don't like autumn will agree. They say its too symptomatic...the period of decay, when the year's growth withers and moulders and the prospect is left bleak. That is undeniable and those who feel the melancholy of autumn should hold fast to the faith that - if winter comes can spring be you-know-what! And Leeds as a city is as unprepossessing as most (we'll allow for the fact that its inhabitants will indignantly deny that) though in fact, it may be even more so in that it has a motorway stabbing right to its very heart.

We hasten to add that the town that looks enticing in dark autumn days must be rare; extremely rare. The prospect is normally grey. Grey and drab - and depressing if you have a romantic streak, perhaps. Yet this year, the fogs were staved off for an appreciable time at least. And the rain, too. Staved off long enough for the ICC to hold its annual get-together in well-nigh perfect conditions. The rain was staved off, too, to the extent that it wasn't until November that certain areas in Wales relaxed the restrictions on car-washing &c., so shallow had the reservoirs become.

NOT ONLY was the fog staved off - but the sun shone, glitteringly, gloriously..... and whatever one says about the centre of Leeds, considerable foresight has been shewn by successive City Fathers in ensuring that Leeds abounds in fine open, green, spaces. Such a space is the beautiful Rounday Park of Leeds, and situated in this lovely park is the Mansion Hotel which this year, thanks to foresight on the part of young Michael Crampton, staged our annual er...party...er..meeting, get-together.... call it what you will. And on October 19 (or the day before for some) members wended their way there, close on 70 of them. They were well-rewarded, it would seem.

These events are always highly enjoyable. This year, those who were able to attend, will almost certainly vote it memorable. In fact, they voted more than that! Before the excellent dinner was over there was a seemingly concerted demand from the diners THAT WE COME HERE NEXT YEAR! And so it was agreed, on the spot. Symptomatic? No doubt about it.

> Dinner was arranged up on the first-floor to which one ascended via an elegant, balustraded stair-case both to the left and to the right. And the view afforded from the spacious windows was quite breath-taking. The park sloped gently downwards and away from the hotel, culminating in a silvery lake just to be seen through the trees. The grass was splendidly green but the trees and other foliage which abounded emitted every splendid colour from golden to the darkest of dark brown, with a shimmering purple suffusing the distant scene. And I was delighted and even entranced to see people taking Sunday lunch-time constitutionals - in some ways, an old-fashioned scene. Moreover, such was the brilliance of the day that cameras were snapping and recording the idyllic scene and day. A lovely prelude for what was to come.

Michael Crampton and I necessarily went to the hotel at an earlier hour to check on arrangements generally, and the sound-system in particular. Both were excellent. Soon the members were turning up from all parts of the compass, as we will see later on.

There was an amusing situation reigning when we got to the Mansion around 2.30! The staff of the hotel had somehow gained the impression that Bing himself would be coming to the hotel! When we put on a "test-tape" - Bing singing of course - to check the system, maids and waitresses were peering excitedly round and through the doors fully expecting to see Bing himself singing! Indeed, a couple of them said they partic-

ularly wanted to see Bing - because they had ordered the WORLD RECORDS set!

> Which leads me to say, in answer to several correspondents, we are very cognisant of the fact that members would very much like Bing to be present at one of these meetings. Bing's schedule when he is in Britain, is very heavy but we feel certain that if it proves at all possible, he certainly will attend, if only briefly. We will work to that end. In the Mansion Hotel at Leeds, moreover, we have a venue to which we could with confidence invite Bing to attend. For now, however, back to this year's memorable event - for that is what it proved to be - highly memorable and highly enjoyable.

The host-organiser, Mike Crampton, opened the proceedings in his usual brisk and efficient manner though, alas, he had to report that Bing's greeting on tape had obviously been delayed and couldn't therefore be played. He could and did play greetings from Scotland in the familiar voices of James Dineen and Ninian Faichney. Mike ran thro' the proposed "programme" and then it was the turn of yours truly once more to experience that odd feeling of unreality that always hits me when I find myself with the "duty" - albeit pleasant - of addressing our assembled members. One of these days I must sit down quietly and really ponder out how it comes that I find myself standing up and talking to an audience of vastly knowledgeable Crosbyites who probably know a lot more about Bing than I ever will. After all, all I did orginally was to write to the then secretary, FRANK MURPHY, asking for details of the Crosby society - just as so many write to me now!

However, lest that sounds as if I am reluctant secretary and "addressor" at our meetings I hasten to say now, as I did at Leeds, what a real pleasure it is - worth every mile of the long journey from South Wales - to greet kindred spirits gathered together on the fascinating subject of Mr. C.

> And this year we had some special guests to greet, by which I don't mean that any of the guests were NOT special but it would be too lengthy to list them all so I will single out some of those who were a little "extra special"! Two new faces - though not new otherwise for we have long known them - actually travelled between them a total of about 800 miles to be at the meeting. IAN ARNOTT travelled southwards to Leeds from the far north of Scotland, Inverness to be precise; while from Hastings on the south coast, TONY HARRISON travelled up around 300 miles to be there! This, I felt, was eloquent testament to the keen-ness of members in the cause of Crosbyana.

Another first-time visitor we were delighted to see was DEREK PARKES who after some years "in the wildnerness" so to speak has returned to the ranks of organised Crosbyana. And when I say that Derek was one of the original, distinguished, team that compiled the monumental discography, THE ROAD TO BING CROSBY, it will be understood how much we appreciated Derek's presence. One of his fellow-compilers, RALPH HARDING, had journeyed up from London so it was a pity that FRED REYNOLDS and BOB ROBERTS were unable to be present for we could have then made a concerted "attack" on them for permission to republish their comprehensive work! This is ardently desired by so many members. We were delighted to greet ADRIENNE and ROY DODDS, from Derby; HOWARD ROWLEY, also from Codnor, Derbyshire, GRANVILLE ALLEN from Nottingham....but to cut the story down we had members, in addition to these, from Burnely, Harrogate, Hull, Ipswich, Manchester, Newcastke, Stockport and Wigan. They made a lovely party!

THE INCREDIBLE YEAR OF 1975: Naturally a brief, if not sketchy, review of this great year was called for - for what a year it has been! More members than ever before had had the great pleasure of meeting Bing at last, seeing him perform (both in the TV studios and on the golf-courses!) A whole, completely new, host of Crosby-memories had been originated in 1975 - and all within two years of a severe illness that had very ominous overtones back in January of '74. Incredibly, Bing had spent his longest and most eventful visit ever to Britain. He had recorded three new albums; he had shone in no less than four major television shows and had been reported in all different sorts of places almost daily in the press. In return, we like to think Bing received the most

fervent reaffirmation, the most convincing demonstration, of the unique place he has in the hearts of practically everyone in Great Britain - and especially so in the hearts of the members of the ICC. The great Bing Crosby....who else, it can easily be asked, could be more worthy of that devotion with his unique voice, his outstanding talent in other directions, his unbelievable modesty, his humour and his charming philosophy? Truly there is only one Crosby.

THAT YORKSHIRE PUB VISIT: Here might be a good point to repeat here what I said at Leeds concerning Bing's surprise visit to a Yorkshire pub. It was impossible for us to let the disappointed Yorkshire members know because we didn't know ourselves until we saw it in the papers! Apart from his recording, TV, radio, golf and other activities, it seemed Bing was taking advantage of his off-duty time to show his family something of the splendour of Britain in a lovely summer and was thus likely to drop in almost anywhere. And even to sing for the "regulars" as it was reported he did in this particular Yorkshire incident! We certainly agree that it was a grievous disappointment to those Yorkshire fans who, some of them, had waited 40 years to meet Bing - to suddenly find he had been on their doorstep almost, singing in the local! But that was the kind of summer it was.

AND THAT PALLADIUM CONCERT! The situation remains the same as stated in the last issue of BING. This sensational story was printed in the SUN and while I have no doubts Bing may have mentioned such a project - and might even really have the intention to give a concert for his British fans at the London Palladium - there is certainly no concrete news of any arrangements. As soon as there is anything to report, members will be the first to know. One little thought persists; how could Bing's British fans be squeezed into ANY theatre, leave alone the comparatively modestly-seated Palladium?!

THE ANNIVERSARIES: This year's event at Leeds was the 10th in successive years; and also marked 25 years of the ICC or its forerunner, the British Crosby Society. But why Leeds? A natural question and the answer is that Frank Murphy our former (and original) Secretary had the idea of holding an annual party at his home in Newcastle...ten years ago. Mike Crampton attended some of these (he joined Crosbyana when he was 14!) and when Frank perforce resigned from the "management" Michael, thinking it was a pity to lose the annual reunion, assumed the mantle of organiser - firstly at the home of his long-suffering mother in - Leeds, naturally. We moved to other venues as the attendances grew - and that's how we found ourselves on October 19 this year in the highly congenial confines of the Mansion Hotel in that city of Leeds.

That our members are extremely widespread, geographically, has been amply demonstrated by listing the areas from which members came...and that is without mentioning our valued friends and members in Australia, New Zealand, Europe generally, America, Canada and one or two other places. So wherever a get-together is held it means considerable travelling and invariably overnight expense. But at least, you know why it is Leeds - and not so far, London, Birmingham, Manchester, Cardiff or even Croescyceiliog. (I wanted to include LLANFAIRPWLGWYNGILGOGAIROCHWINDORBWLLLANTESILLIOGOGOGOCH but as a Londoner born and bred despite my Welsh domicile I lost my nerve and couldn't embark on its pronunciation!) But Leeds is surprisingly convenient: motorways run right into it and it has a large well-served railway station.

We were also calling this year's event the "25th Anniversary."...and this description brought me some kindly-derisory letters which said, in effect: "25 years? Pooofh.... Bing's celebrating 50 years - what sort of tribute is that? I was in a Crosby club in the 30s...." Fair comment, too. I explained to the meeting that we were perfectly cognisant of the fact that Crosby clubs of one kind or another had been running on and off since the early 30s, but the ICC represents Crosbyana in what might be called the modern sense and was certainly the only coherent Circle that had been running without break of any kind since 1950.

I CANNOT, HOWEVER, RESIST POINTING OUT THAT THERE'S A MAN WHO WRITES TO ME AND INSISTS THAT 1950 IS "RECENT"! THAT'S NOT SO AMUSING AS IT SOUNDS, FOR I FIND MYSELF THINKING ON THOSE LINES, TOO!

The great "dividing-line" was, of course, the 2nd World War which separated two eras in catastrophic fashion. The years of the 'Thirties are separated by a gulf from the "modern era" in a way that cannot be described - but there was one concrete link - Bing went on singing! I mean, Bing singing with Rosemary Clooney in the 'Fifties DOES seem just the other day compared with Bing singing with Connie Boswell....in the 30's. However, as usual, I am digressing; at Leeds I concluded my address by reading out the following:

> "We must face the fact that to all intents and purposes, Bing's recording career is virtually at an end...."

This produced such a disbelieving, shocked look on the faces of my listeners that I could prolong things no longer - I hastily explained that this profoundly false prophecy had appeared in a Crosby magazine 12 YEARS AGO! It seemed to me a whimsical way of introducing our very special "star" guest who had, only this year, made that prophecy even more ludicrous. So far - and deliberately so - he has not been named. It was my very great pleasure to introduce him:

KEN BARNES

WAS WITH US IN LEEDS!

It will be readily appreciated that the presence of Ken Barnes, Bing's latest, pioneering record producer, ensured it being a memorable affair, even if there had been no other reasons. I say "pioneering" because it was Ken Barnes who had the drive and initiative (not to mention the persuasive powers) to get Bing to record in Britain. We had had a whisper via Eric Crowder that Ken would make an effort to attend but we couldn't be certain until he actually arrived. This, to our great delight, he did.

"Pioneering" producer indeed; it may be argued, rightly to an extent, that Bing had recorded an album in Britain before when he did the HOLIDAY IN EUROPE album in the Decca studios with Malcolm Lockyer as musical director. But it is common knowledge that the London version of that album never saw the light of day as far as issue was concerned.

So quite the nicest thing I had to do at Leeds was to cut short my ramblings and introduce Ken to our members; the reception he received must have left him in no doubt as to what our members thought of his great stimulus to Crosbyana in the past year. Furthermore, there was no doubt that a tremendous rapport was immediately apparent between Ken and our members. He had indicated to me that he was quite prepared to address the meeting and this he proceeded to do in easy, informal, yet fascinating style. He took us through the whole story of how the recording sessions came about. And a great story it is, too. We knew, of course, of Leslie Gaylor's initial contact with Ken on account of the latter's book on THE SONG STYLISTS which set the ball rolling and fired Ken with the idea, as it were.

"POP OUT TO THE HOUSE..."

We heard how Ken, in the States, contacted the Crosby office and left various messages, spoke to Mr. Grillo, and had a distinct feeling he was getting nowhere....when he got a telephone call from Bing's secretary: "Mr. Crosby would like to hear from me - and would I phone him at his home please?" This Ken lost no time in doing...

> "Pop out to the house and we can talk about it..." said Bing.
> Popping over to the house meant a flight of over 400 miles!

But again, Ken lost no time: this was progress; things were definitely moving! But he had some tribulations yet: he told us.

"Even the taxi-driver from the airport got lost for - surprisingly - he didn't know where the famed Crosby home was - and Ken had to ring Bing again, obviously being so near yet so far away!

He got there eventually, of course, and had to announce himself through an impersonal grille whereupon the gates swung open automatically ....and soon he was being ushered in by the butler to Bing's study. And Bing was waiting to greet him. Clearly a great moment for Ken. And there immediately occurred a most happy development:

> "I felt Bing liked me, " said Ken, "and I knew I could talk to him... and he to me..."

Bing proved highly agreeable as Ken expounded his ideas and indeed seemed very interested though when he was ushered out a few hours later he found himself wondering whether that was the end of the matter or whether, in fact, Bing could "get in touch with you" as he said to Ken on parting. Some weeks later when he was beginning to resign himself to the fact that Bing had decided against it - Bing had put up the usual arguments about him "not selling these days....it was a risk..." Ken was, as he told us, delighted to receive the familiar envelope with the BING CROSBY insignia on it - AND BING WANTED TO GO AHEAD!

> Mind you, Bing did express on or two reservations - he didn't care for Ken's tentative title: BING BACK ON THE BALL. "I've never really been away," wrote Bing, "and that title indicates that I have...."; and there were things to do to some of the lyrics, BUT THE MAIN THING WAS - BING NOT ONLY SEEMED WILLING TO MAKE THE ALBUM, HE SOUNDED KEEN TO DO SO!

Ken, as we know, is what is known as an "independent producer" - that is the modern trend, as a matter of fact, and having got this sensational agreement from Bing he had to "open negotiations" to sell his wares, as it were, to a record company. Ken told us he presented his project to all the big record companies and with the exception of just one they all expressed their very willingness to undertake the project.

From then on, things most quickly; Ken made a further visit to the States with Pete Moore to discuss arrangements, modifications to lyrics and other details and make the firm arrangements. Among the more interesting items Ken told us was that the original lyric of the title song, THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT, while good, would have had Bing singing impossible lines....ending with unlikely words! And that Both Bing and Ken considerably re-wrote the lyrics while retaining, of course, the philosophical style of the song.

THE "THEME" CONCEPT:

As another point of interest, it is Ken's belief and his way of working, that an album these days requires a theme - philosophical looking back is obviously the motif of THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT. And as he fully expects to work with Bing again he will not be averse to getting ideas from our members. It will not be easy. The "theme" idea almost certainly requires an original song to launch it - though not necessarily so. By theme, I mean of course an underlying sequence of MEANING throughout the album. There have, of course, been such issues on a fairly elementary basis, e.g. BING AND THE DIXIELAND BANDS, HOLIDAY IN SPAIN, BING SINGS COLE PORTER and so many others; but I imagine the approach Ken has in mind is more subtle. I have already given considerable thought to this and I can only repeat: IT IS NOT EASY to, first of all, get a theme and then to develop it. But if anyone feels they have such a motif Ken would be delighted to hear of it.

"NOW I THINK I'VE GOT THE GOUT"!

An odd line, you may think! But if Ken had made a ghastly transcribing accident that's how the last line of THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT would have been sung by Bing! A mind-boggling thought indeed.

> Happily, Ken had had the foresight to bring some of the actual recording studio tapes with him to illustrate one or two points - exclusive, naturally, to our private Crosby gathering. These really are incredible - and equally fascinating. We are well aware that the days when Bing, or any other singer, for that matter, stood up in front of the band with one microphone for him

and another for the band are long gone. Bing still stands up with the band (at least he did in London) but Ken recorded the tracks on 16-track tape with yet a special "voicing" track for Bing himself! The tape is about 2 inches wide! Another big difference is that in the old days you made a "take" and if it was all right, all well and good and the studio manager was thankful to save cash! If it wasn't OK you had to do the whole thing over again...and again... Nowadays, a delightful "conversation piece" accompanies the recording - one hears the quips, the groans, the encouragement, the discussions on how to do a certain phrase and all the chat that goes on between the producer, the musicians and the artist! And highly amusing it can be if the atmosphere is right - as we heard at Leeds.

> For instance, the title song did require several efforts; but between these different goes at it they could pick up at any convenient spot and not start from the beginning again each time...and during one "take", whether or not Bing did indeed feel a twinge in a big toe, or whether it was just pure whimsy, instead of ending up with "...that's what life is all about" Bing sang:
>
> "..and now I think I've got the gout!"

After the inevitable hilarity, Ken said they were ready to go again; "I take it you don't want the 'gout'line," queried Bing?

Ken divulged to us that during a marathon recording session it is always his method to encourage the artist. "No matter who it is, even Bing, the artist is human, he likes to have reassurance that he is doing well....he may think he is singing well, or singing badly...whatever is happening, I always tell the artist he is doing great...if he isn't it lifts him. And if he IS singing well, he gets even better."

Sounds a very sound piece of physchology to me. And when the time came that Bing wasn't singing just the way Ken thought he should - loud lines softly, or soft lines loudly, I forget which! - Ken called over the speakers: "You're singing great Bing...this is fine...but I think it would be better if you sang.....so and so..."

> BING CAME BACK: "AAAAH, YOU'RE VERY KIND KEN....I SUPPOSE YOU AND THE BOYS THINK I'M GONNA TAKE YOU OUT FOR CHAMPAGNE AFTERWARDS.... I CAN'T..I'VE HAD A BAD SEASON!"

One got the impression that while hard work was undoubtedly going on, it was done in a truly delightful adtmosphere of mutual respect, mutual confidence - and especially, good humour. And it was good to hear.

> Incidentally, reverting to the "one-mike, one-take days"thoughts, it is quite another thought that Ken Barnes could produce an entirely different album without the band playing or Bing singing another note! It would merely mean (merely!) re-shuffling the tracks on that large tape - bringing in the strings where the brass was and vice-versa and any other kind of permutation! As I say, quite a thought.

"THE TWO GREATEST ENTERTAINERS OF THE CENTURY..."

Ken then proceeded to the Bing/Fred Astaire sessions - moved from Bond Street to Wembley, by the way, and he prefaced his remarks by saying: "I was conscious that I was recording- arguably - the two finest entertainers of this century...." There is no argument as far as I'm concerned!

But the differing approaches to the session by Bing and Fred, as related by Ken, were well-nigh hilarious! Fred, it seems (and we can easily accept it) is "thoroughly professional, worries and frets, continually bugged by not reaching his best standards.... which are literally perfection...at least, according to Fred's standards..." Bing, arriving back in London from Scotland very late at night, could only be contacted on the Monday morning with the news that Fred was in town, ready and waiting, and wanted to

spend the day rehearsing, announced "Ah...can't do that Ken...I'm tied up all day." (on the golf-course, possibly though not assuredly!)

> When Ken got back on the phone to Fred with this item, Fred grumbles: "Bing's always the same...its all right for him...he can go in and sing the songs first time...he's used to it. I just GOT to rehearse...." The situation was ironed out for Fred, however, by someone else doing Bing's part of the proceedings! That someone was Ken himself!

As readers already know, the album (of which we were fortunate enough to hear on tape at Leeds) consists of ten duets, with Bing doing one solo of one of Fred's famous songs (CHANGE PARTNERS) and vice versa Fred singing solo ITS EASY TO REMEMBER.

Fred's method of getting things right was to take a red pencil and underline HIS lines in red pencil while Bing's were marked with blue pencil. Very methodical, very sensible - an elementary precaution one imagines, even tho' the arranger had already marked in "BING" or "FRED".....

> But while they were actually recording one of the songs, Bing suddenly stops and announces that it isn't right - Fred should sing that line, and he, Bing, the following one instead of the way it was marked out. When four-way agreement (Bing, Fred, Pete and Ken) had been reached on the change, Fred, only reluctantly agreeing, takes up his red and blue pencils and proceeds to attempt to reverse the underlining he'd already done! We can barely imagine the result!

Again, one of the numbers screamed out for Fred to do a tap-dance "break" - merely a second or two, but initially Fred was quite adamant he wouldn't do it. "No, I've retired from dancing...I don't dance any more..." Ken worked on him for ages for just this one little effort to complete the track - here's recording technique again: the space had remained blank on the tape and the taps required were to be recorded separately and slotted in! Then Ken had a brainwave: "All right then, Fred, if you won't do it, I guess I'll have to get some other dancer to do it....it'll give Lionel Blair the after-dinner story of his life - that he was called in to do Fred Astaire's dancing for him!" Fred said all right, he'd do it under protest.

> But although, said Ken, he did a perfect machine-gun dance "break" - Fred wasn't satisfied. He did about six more before he announced that THAT one would do!! Perfectionist indeed. "But don't misunderstand me," said Ken,"Fred is one of the most charming, considerate of persons..."

Thus, it is very easy to understand why this year's gathering did turn out to be so outstanding - the kind of authentic behind-the-scenes story that was so very much to the liking of those present. As already stated, Ken received a very warm welcome indeed - and an equally warm send-off when he had to leave for London around 9.30. We felt that he, too, had enjoyed himself in the company of such a band of Crosby admirers.

But before Ken Barnes left he did express his willingness to "answer questions" - and they came thick and fast! "Why Pete Moore?" - In my opinion he is the best arranger around....."Is the album selling, is it a success commercially?" - Yes, they had moved into the "black" some time ago and everyone was delighted, especially United Artits. "Why did you call your book SINATRA AND THE SONG STYLISTS when the contents of the book indicated the main emphasis on Bing?" - I didn't, the publishers selected the title.... "Is Bing going to record with you again....?" I certainly hope so...Bing will be back here next June... "Why did you say in your book that Bing was inconsistent? (This was a fierce body-line ball from Yvonne Bowles of London!) And it needed more than a brisk answer...and that could be the subject of a very, very, lengthy article! "The accompaniment on the Vera Lynn show wasn't a patch for THAT'S WHAT LIFE &C..." No, and it could have been worse if we hadn't insisted on the orchestra being augmented.....

"Where was the stylish picture for the sleeve of the album taken?" At the home of (and here I must confess to a lapse of memory, but I feel it was the home of the photographer - but Ken added the information that the organ didn't work!) Actually, this photograph is highly reminiscent of a "set" from the TV show, STARS ON SUNDAY - which is what I originally considered it to be.

"Which was the one company that declined the chance of handling the new album?" - RCA - we have Como! Fair comment - yet RCA have taken the opportunity to reissue the "doubler" of Bing/Rosemary Clooney and the Scobey Frisco Jazz Band. There were many other questions which Ken answered most engagingly.

The Bing/Astaire album will be issued in early December - and will be accompanied by TV advertising and an advertisement in RADIO TIMES projecting BOTH albums - THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT and the duet-album. Furthermore, the BBC is to run a Crosby-film series culminating in WHITE CHRISTMAS just before Yuletide.

We had one small "mishap" at Leeds which wasn't however, without its humorous aspect! One of the guests this year was our good friend ROY CHAPPELL, who keeps busy 52 weeks a year in the clubs of the land singing with a TOUCH OF THE BING'S! Roy arrived with his film projector and ROAD TO MORROCCO and BIRTH OF THE BLUES films, which was a very kind effort especially as Roy would have to depart between 6 and 7 o'clock for a singing engagement in Manchester. Alas, the projector wouldn't work! Well, it worked, but ran too slowly, giving Bing and Bob as they rocked upon the waves in the opening sequence of MOROCCO the most incredible sepulchral tones! One can imagine's Roy's chagrin, especially as it had worked beautifully in the home of your Editor just a month earlier. At the same time the mind boggles as to what would have happened if the film HAD worked....it was around 4.40 - dinner was scheduled at 5.00! We all felt for Roy and his disconcerting experience - he even rang me later in the evening from Manchester to apologise. And this was certainly quite unnecessary for, as I say, we all understand these things happen. I've known in happen in the Gaumont Palace!

MICK DRURY was in exceptionally sparkling form with his "requests" tape this year and really excelled himself in holding the interest of the listeners. The requests this year leaned heavily on the new album! Regrettably, Mick found he couldn't attend in person (he hadn't been feeling too well) - but we all felt he was present, nevertheless. Our thanks to him, as always, for his tremendous effort - tremendous and TEDIOUS in getting all the records from the archives, though as we said, the task was just a little less tedious this year because of THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT....as Mick ended his marathon stint of record-playing/commentary.....

The management of the Mansion Hotel produced a delightful menu for the dinner - graced with a drawing of Bing, complete with flamboyant hat, pipe and swinging a golf club... the Menu? Here it is:

Fresh Honeydew Melon: Beef with Vegetable Soup.
Roast Turkey, Chipolata, Savour Stuffing, Cranberry Sauce.
Roast Potatoes, Creamed Potatoes, Buttered Broccoli.
Sherry Trifle. Coffee/Cream
Chocolate Mints.

Our "guest of honour" Ken Barnes was kept busy signing menus - as well as copies of his book - which made a delightful souvenir of the occasion.

TO BE DISARMINGLY UNORIGINAL - WE FEEL A GOOD TIME WAS HAD BY ALL !!

BOOTS, the chemists, were as many readers will know, selling THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT at "60p off!" as one of the top-selling LPs for a time. It produced a letter in the Sunday Mirror of October 26:

GREAT, I thought, a Bing Crosby record with 60p off. Now some chocolates for the wife. I bought a box, again at a cut price. But I'd changed a fiver and stuffed the loose notes in my back pocket and lost them. Some bargains! And the title of the record: THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT.

T. Knott,
Belgrave Rd. Sale.

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AT THE LEEDS PARTY LAST YEAR a caricature, or more correctly, a sketch of Bing, actually autographed, was raffled...there was a story about its history, too. I believe it was from the Brown Derby Restaurant in America.... however, all those who didn't win it were quite disappointed and because of this, some clever copies have been made and were on sale at Leeds THIS YEAR. They were eagerly snapped up. But just a few remain: they measure 15 inches x 12 inches, and for anyone especially with a Crosby "den", or room, they make an excellent wall decoration. It is quite striking, tho' in black and white.
Copies are 30p post paid if anyone should want one: write to the Editor.....

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ON PAGE 9 I HAVE REFERRED TO THE TAPES WE HEARD AT LEEDS AND ALSO SAID THAT THEY WERE EXCLUSIVE TO OUR PRIVATE MEETING. I WANT TO REINFORCE THAT: THERE IS NO QUESTION OF EVER OBTAINING COPIES, OR OF THEM HAVING ANY OTHER PUBLIC PERFORMANCE. THE ICC MEETING WAS LITERALLY A UNIQUE OCCASION. I'M SURE MEMBERS WILL UNDERSTAND THIS.

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IF YOU would care to know more about the SINATRA MUSIC SOCIETY you should write to MRS. BERYL OVERBURY, 60 Highland Way, REDDITCH, Worcs. B98 7RH. There, I've said it! But joking aside, I must say that the current issue of their magazine, PERFECTLY FRANK, contains a very fair, and certainly a very readable review of Bing's LP THAT'S W.L.I.S A.B. by a gentleman of the name of ARTHUR JACKSON with a final line of "...shows clearly that Bing Crosby is still very much a Superstar." Nice picture of Bing too...with Sinatra & Dino...

Bing Crosby Fanclub,
Reg Bristo, etc. etc.

Dear Gentlemen:

As great favourite of "Bing Crosby" is he one of the favourites artisten that I loved.
Now will I once on you asked of you for my one photo have with his signature on the front side of the photo on it, so yes will you then so friendly will be and that to my send it. There do you my a great pleasure also.
Then hope I quick news (a letter) to receive of you. Herewith residence I whit the most,

Friendly greet,
Respect....

(Letter from Europe recently received.)

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Letter to LESLIE GAYLOR:

Dear Mr. Gaynor,

I have seen your letter published in the 18 Oct. issue of Music Week magazine. I also read with great interest the 6-page tribute to Bing Crosby's 50th anniversary in show business featured in the 27 Sept issue.
Being myself a great fan of Bing I think I should try to make up a radio show on the event, to be aired thru' the national network here. Bing is known in this country though not so well as, for example, Franc Sinatra. However, there have been several movies featuring Bing shewn here, and some of his songs were released on the Melodiya label. It seems to me that interest could be created to the event here by a special radio show. I know you are a great fan of Bing and I am writing this in the hope of getting some help from your end....will you let me have some examples of Bing's most interesting material. I guess this might be the HIGH SOCIETY sound-track with Armstrong & Sinatra...then one of his most popular LPs (in your opinion) and finally the recent album THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT...I presume I could write the text, but if you would send me some more material...with all my kindest personal regards.

Nothing unusual about that? Well, it was signed: VADIM D. YURCHENKOV - and the address? LENINGRAD, 191025, U.S.S.R. !

BING THAT BOOK!

BY CHARLES THOMPSON

THE AUTHORISED BUT (AS FAR AS THIS REVIEWER IS CONCERNED) DECIDEDLY NOT THE DEFINITIVE BIOGRAPHY

Reviewed here by JOHN BIGNELL, a lifelong devotee of the Master. The book is published by W.H.ALLEN at £3.95p.

My first reaction on completing my bedside reading of this book was one of disbelief! When the author informed me in the opening pages that I was holding the result of four years hard work I took him at his word - after all, one would expect such an important and indeed monumental task as a biography of the greatest and most endearing legend in the whole world of show business to take quite that amount of time.

But, by the end of the book one's disappointment and indeed mute frustration at the wholly inept handling of such an exciting and tremendous project makes it difficult to know where to begin to analyse what went wrong. For assuredly, it certainly did go wrong.

Mind you, misgivings came early on when an anticipatory glance at the index revealed that Victor Young, a considerable figure in the world of Bing, rated mention on just three pages - this for the musician/director who was associated with Mr. C. on more than 150 recordings and film scores galore - whilst even the late, great John Scott Trotter, whose name on more than 330 Brunswicks became synonymous with that of Bing gets mentioned on only six - a niggardly six - pages. A more detailed study of the index then revealed that among the accompanists who were NOT MENTIONED AT ALL were Vic Schoen (forever associated with the wonderful saga of Bing and The Andrews Sisters), Jimmie Grier, Georgie Stoll, The MacIntires (Lani & Dick), Joseph Lilley, Bill Justis, Bob Scobey, Sam Lanin, Nat Finston, Irving Aaronson, Jack Pleis,.....even Buddy Cole seemed to come in surreptitiously on just two pages; Lennie Hayton, in on virtually the start of the Crosby career is mentioned on just one page.

There is, it scarcely needs to be said, no attempt to list any discographical matter. Bearing in mind that Bing is the greatest record-maker and seller of all conceivable time, and that this activity has been the means of bringing the Crosby voice to every last corner of the world, and in so doing, has created memory upon memory, legend upon legend, for millions of people, the omission of due tribute in this direction is, to me, quite unforgivable.

Bing's quite incredible screen career comes in - or rather does NOT come in - for anything faintly approximating to its scope and success. I write completely in sorrow and frustration; not so much in anger as disbelief.

What IS there, then, on the credit side? Well, there are some very interesting and quite rare photographs, especially from the very early days and indeed from Bing's own very early years as a boy and young man. There are, too, a couple of amusing stories new to me - amongst many, however, which I have now heard dozens of times and which do not improve with the reiteration. I've not always believed them, anyway.

I liked, too, and appreciated the piece concerning Bing's difficulties with daughter Mary Frances - having a lifetime's experience of trying to cope with young sons and bawling them out when and where (I considered!) necessary, the problem of coping with a daughter's strategically produced tears must surely defy solution. At least, to both daughter's and father's satisfaction.

But having said this, one has just about said all one can say in praise of the author.

Or rather, perhaps, his book. For me he has a lightweight, fairly glib style of writing which is capable of conveying a totally wrong impression. Indeed, one eminent reviewer in one of the "heavier" Sunday newspapers was deceived completely by this facile style of writing to the extent that he commented, in his review, that Bing had had "everything just too easy - success came so easily that he could not feel much satisfaction with his life's work". Such a statement I would dispute in the strongest possible terms. That anyone can sustain a stupendous career spanning - to date - fifty years without unbelievable effort is nonsensical. Yet, one can understand people not delving below the surface if they follow the example of this book.

> It was Bing's brother Bob, the youngest of the clan, who in typically laconic Crosby style put paid to all these "luck" opinions when he tersely said: Yeah, he just rolled up hill to success!

I would add my own view - and surely it is relevant - that it was Bing's incomparable style and his mastery of his chosen career that made it seem easy. Things didn't just happen. Bing made them happen. And to those who will persist in the argument that Bing was lucky to be the right man in the right place at the right time, and had invaluable aid from a discerning trio of people - Mr. Daly, his brother Everett, and Mr. Kapp - I would retort that this certainly was invaluable to Bing and his career; but Bing still had to "deliver the goods". This he did, and continues to do, in immaculate fashion. There were others who were around at the time; in the right place, one might say. But where are they now?

Still, even now, I am disposed to be charitable - or at least, make a gesture to that (I hope!) admirable end: Perhaps in this onrush of altruism one can forgive the author for the shortcomings of the book; after all, the subject on which he was commissioned (or elected) to write does, after all, provide scores of dedicated contributors to this magazine with an endless supply of material over a period of some twenty-five years. Within the confines of, probably, a restricted budget and with an eye on the contemporary commercial market - the tie-up with Bing's 1975 exploits is obvious at the end of the book - I have to concede, albeit grudgingly, that Mr. Thompson has provided his publishers with a saleable commodity.

> But for one, to me, unpardonable offence, this review might end there. Mr. Thompson, however, commits what I consider a scarcely credible error. For whatever motives - commercial, sensationalism, obligatory revelations of "the man behind the man" I know not why but Mr.Thompson has the effrontery to endeavour to prove that Bing, the most modest and best-loved performer of peerless talent is, in effect, "a loner". Numerous examples are trotted out, and to their shame several notable names allowed themselves to be associated with this inexplicable exercise.
>
> Bing a loner? What madness could have possessed the author to introduce this laughable and contemptuous element into his book? In the face of the most powerful testimony on record, film, on radio and television - all these media compound the unshakeable belief that Bing is a man with a unique ability to tower above his contemporaries whilst at the same time exude a charisma which not only puts them at ease but to actually inspire them to excel themselves in his presence - Mr. Thompson seeks to "prove" a shameful lie - or at best a total misconception - as the truth.

I have heard that amongst those disenchanted with this charge against the great man is Bing himself. "I have friends amongst all manner of people and from all walks of life - from kings to bell-boys", he is reported to have said on reading these, to us, distressing insinuations, "but if that's the way I appear to people I guess that's the way I am!" One can detect here, even, a willingness to agree,and yet being profoundly mystified, if not disbelieving, of what is said about him in this book. There you have it, my Crosby friends, for you will note that Bing does not launch into a tirade of protest or temperamental outburst as I am sure lesser men would have when deeply hurt. He, in effect, turns the other cheek and accepts that there may be some truth in the charge.

> There could, surely, not be any better way to demonstrate the true humility and greatness of Bing Crosby than his reaction to his palpably unjust and untrue accusation. I, for one, will refer to this matter no more except to say that for the first time in my life I am writing to Bing himself to let him know that thousands of us do not believe a word of this strange assessment of his character.

One last thing: I remain convinced that long after this book is forgotten the true, definitive, biography of Bing WILL be written. Who knows - the nominal author may even make use of the vast knowledge and talents of our own happy band!

Editor: Hmmmm.....fancy us getting contentious in our CHRISTMAS issue! I have, of course, read the book; I kept my ear to the ground, especially at Leeds - and I have reinforced my own initial view, and this was that, anticipating a turkey banquet we finished up with a spam sandwich. Furthermore, there were times reading this book by Mr. Thompson that I got the distinct impression that he didn't even like Bing!

Certainly this book fulfils no discernible useful purpose. A comprehensive biography is badly needed. But, who is to write it? There have been some good books on Bing - the one by Dr. Mize in the 40's was on the right lines - brother Ted and Barry Ulanova (I feel I may have that wrong but you will know him), Bing's own CALL ME LUCKY. But all were lacking - if only because they were written TOO EARLY!

> I must confess that impressions gained by producing a radio programme, albeit not to be lightly dismissed from such a source, were far from what is required to write THE book on the Crosby career. At least, that was my view. The book HAS to be written by someone who was at hand in the late 20's and early 30's. It may be pointed out - it probably will be - that great books are appearing almost every day on notabilities long dead. That cannot be denied; yet in the case of Bing Crosby I don't know how the flavour, the sheer magnitude, the world-shaking impact of Bing can be faithfully transcribed to a literary effort short of experiencing those incredible years, even at a distance. Perhaps a Transatlantic distance....

Yet there are certain facts which must be faced in desiring this comprehensive biography of Bing. Even a modest discography, and an equally modest resume of his screen and radio career (we'll leave TV out of it for the moment), combined with the story of his life, his decisions, his associates, his advisers, his musical directors, his co-artists, his "rolling up hill to success" aspects, is going to amount to a massive, probably prohibitive, tome. FRED REYNOLDS can tell a story about this. Fred was one of the discographical team (one of its most diligent members incidentally); likewise he had a mammoth share in THE ROAD TO HOLLYWOOD. Years back he had the idea of a comprehensive publication on Bing and got as far as interesting a publisher. But the commercial issue is - who, and how many of them, are going to purchase what would undoubtedly be a very, very, expensive book? Like records, books have to be best-sellers to make money....and while such a volume on Bing would certainly have a ready-made market the question would remain: can it possible pay? Publishing houses, no more than record companies, are not charitable institutions.

A mountainous book was produced about Al Jolson, semi-privately, a few years back...long before inflation came into fashion it cost £15! And great as Jolson was, a book on Bing would be considerable more extensive. Those are facts.

Now I come to the feature of the book which so desolated John Bignell. And I can fully understand why this is so: and many more readers will feel the same way. Yet, it is not completely untrue that Bing can be described as a "loner" - whatever that really means. Whether it should have been made such a feature of this current book is open to question - at least, treated in the way it is. I put myself on record as believing that it may be to an extent true. And that suits me. For me Bing IS a man apart; there are multifarious reasons for believing him to be so - and if having an - at times - aloof private self sets him apart - so what?

For me, Bing is NOT one of the boys though he himself often says this to interviewers. Many times Bing has been described, to his face, as a "living legend". And what does he say in reply? "Me, legend? No, I was just one of the boys, happy to be around - and delighted to be paid for what I would have done for nothing!" With profound respect, rubbish! He certainly IS a living legend:

> "BING ILL" - thus a placard in London; nothing more - but so much to plunge hundreds of thousands into the deepest gloom.

As for loving his work and getting paid for it, well, we'll allow a little bit of whimsy on Bing's part. Possibly at the start, rubbing shoulders with other legends like Whiteman, Bix, Venuti, Lang, Dorseys and so on, being highly gratified at his growing success, Bing was happy, very happy. Largely he has remained so....but if anyone is going to tell me, incldding Bing himself, that going to the Decca studios (and others) regularly for all those incredible years, making those thousands of records, working on film sets, rehearsing, rehearsing, rehearsing for ALL of these activities...the radio, daily! - was unrelieved joy, I can only repeat: rubbish. It was hard work; every record, every film, became the LATEST criterion of his success. That they went on being just that, right up to the present day, was due to - HARD WORK.

So, assuredly not "one of the boys". And as for the other aspects of a "loner", I always remember that Bing is a deep-thinking, religious and erudite man. In other words, not the type of man who looks at the world thro' rose-coloured spectacles; does not see it all as part of a studio scenery, a backdrop. The "public" Bing reacts kindly and friendlily to his public - and never misses the right phrase - take that one to the ladies: "Go on, you're too YOUNG to remember me!" Who but an idiot would accept that Bing spends 24 hours a day like that?

> Bing is a man who knows precisely how to handle his life and his career. Isn't that apparent? And if he will never be one of the back-slapping "Hi-ya Bing!" people - that's the way at least I prefer it to be.

We've had evidence from much nearer home, incidentally. I well recall the late Leslie Phythian telling me - and writing of it - about his great joy at meeting Bing at Cockermouth in Cumberland in 1966 when Bing was here to do a fishing film. Bing was usually accessible; he was invariably extremely affable - even grateful, to the hordes that daily turned up to greet him at or around the hotel. Leslie sat in the bar with him, chatted endlessly, even had Bing singing odd snatches of long-ago songs in a euphora of nostalgia. And Leslie was profoundly moved to find that Bing was indeed a great man, from every angle. He also told the tale of the importunate photographer: Bing had, as always, given generous facilities to the photographers - the professional ones that is, and on this occasion after enquiring if everyone had had enough he expressed a wish to be bothered no more that night. They seemed to withdraw; until some time later Bing came downstairs, resplendent in evening dress on his way to a dinner engagement, and a photographer stepped in front of him. Leslie related how "those blue-green eyes took on the aspect of cracked ice, as Bing curtly told the photographer: "I said no more photographs." I hope, said Leslie, I would never be so unfortunate as to have that expression turned on me."

> Of course he wouldn't have had it; he would never have presumed to uncalled-for liberties. But it is of such things, I believe, that the complete mis-nomer of "loner" is sometimes applied to Bing. Like turning up on a cold, raw, day at the recording studios when, perhaps the last thing he felt like doing, was to sing!

Possibly this was what the author was trying to convey. If he feels Bing can be withdrawn, aloof, troubled by thoughts AT TIMES - then I agree with him. But "LONER" is the wrong word.

However, be that as it may: this book, whatever its shortcomings, was extremely difficult to obtain in some places. I myself, for instance, rang Smiths on a Friday; learned they had the book and went down next day, Saturday, to get it. I looked in vain and when I

enquired from the lady-in-charge where it might be found she said: "Yes, its over here... and was then astonished herself to find that the copies they had had in only the day before were all sold! So, as John Bignell said, no doubt they had a saleable commodity. I might add, it was a month before they got further supplies in.

AND WHILE WE'RE ON CONTENTIOUS SUBJECTS PERHAPS WE'D BEST DEAL WITH THIS LETTER FROM THE STATES: written by Herb Bootman, 3714 Poe Street, San Diego, California 92107...

I have been with the ICC for years and it has been a happy relationship, until suddenly, not once but thrice, I have been offended by disparaging remarks on pages of Issue No. 38, June, 1975.

1. In an editorial comment on p. 8 you took seriously what was poked in fun when you criticised THE ROMANTIC RIVALS. Of course, no serious collector believes Crosby and Columbo ever recorded a duet, so why be stuffy about an obvious gag. When you try to put down such a towering figure as Gordon Wall you are going to lose respect from your readers. Wall's acknowledged niche in Crosbyana is secure.

2 & 3. There were two brief, derisive references to BINGANG on pages 29 and 31 which were uncalled for. Your two periodicals are not in competition; they augment each other. If your mag is so much better, why sneer at the newer, struggling sister publication run by two charming, younger ladies with very little outside help? You have a group of voluble, articulate contributors; these ladies have a direct pipeline to the Man. Check me if I'm wrong but I would say the average avid Crosby fan is male and past 50. These two ladies are the exceptions; they are of the opposite gender and distinctly younger. But they have all the necessary enthusiasm and devotion.

More power to you, Reg; but remember, putting down other aficionados doesn't increase the stature of ICC.

Sincerely,
HERB BOOTMAN.

Editor: As I wasn't Editor for the issue Herb mentions, and didn't even write the pieces in question it would have been easier for me to pass his complaint to those who did; secondly, I could totally ignore Herb's letter. Neither of these courses appealed to me - so there is a third: I have re-read the "offending" items and while I will concede we may have been a little heavy-handed, shall we say, on the Crosby/Columbo record, the pieces that referred to BINGANG highlighted the fact that it appeared to be - correctly - the Crosby scene from a feminine angle and did not necessarily imply disparagement. If it was taken as such by any reader other than Herb.Bootman, then to them as well as Herb, our apologies. We have the highest regard for the ladies in question, their efforts, and indeed ANY efforts that further the cause of Crosbyana. I hope that is now clearly understood.

The reference to Gordon Wall and his acknowledged niche in Crosbyana, which I know to be true, rather puzzled me until I assumed the record Crosby/Columbo had been produced by our Aussie friends. Gordon himself is unlikely to have been offended for it is now some time, alas, since he subscribed to ICC. But regarding the record, I heard it at Leeds and I confess I thought it a wonderful issue. It was intriguing to find that Bing and Russ sang in precisely the same key and that their individual recordings could be so flawlessly dove-tailed. Now, can we all be FRIENDS again?

Herb's reference to the average avid Crosby fan being male and past 50 is probably correct; though there is considerable room for doubt! The age-group seems to be getting lower all the time! In past issues we have read of little Alicia Carter, of Liphook, Hants., who wanted to know all about Bing after she had been presented by him with a winning rosette (and kissed!) on account of her deeds with her horse, MR. PERKS. There

has indeed been a considerable number of young people who have joined us on the strength of falling under the Crosby spell in the 60s and 70s - and I think that's tremendous, for only a few pages back I was talking about not really appreciating the Crosby scene unless one was around in the 'Thirties! However, what of the following which I was delighted to receive from Mr. J.E.Curtis, of Bournemouth:

> My daughter who is 12 years of age is a tremendous fan of Bing Crosby and has for a long time wanted to belong to his fan club. Having obtained your address I would like to join her as a surprise on her birthday, which is October 3rd. I would like to say my daughter has a lot of Bing's records and never misses any of his films on TV and insisted on staying up to see him on the Parkinson Show recently.
>
> I myself am also a Bing fan and find it refreshing to see someone so young appreciating the style of Bing. You may be surprised to know that Dena has been a Bing fan since she was 8 years old.

Refreshing indeed and its lovely to have one so young as Dena joining Alicia Carter... and nice to know that Dad is a Bing admirer, too.

It would be a nice exercise, perhaps, to work out the "average age" of a Bing enthusiast as applied to our membership; alas, I would never be so lacking in gallantry to ask all of our ladies to reveal their ages! But I've always maintained, any age, and whether they have a dozen Bing records or a full collection - they are our sort of people!

Like, for instance, the mother of DAVE SMITH, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne - whom I was delighted to meet in the Bond Street studios last February when he presented a plaque to Bing and with which Bing was much photographed. Dave writes:

> No doubt you had endless letters etc. about the people who have met Bing during this past wonderful summer. I took my mother, who is 77 years of age, and a great admirer of Bing since he first became popular in this country (and that's going back quite a bit!) to Dalmahoay, Edinburgh, on July 6 to meet him. Its always been her ambition, but obviously travelling is a bit tiresome for her, to actually meet him. Which she did.
>
> She was really thrilled and he had quite a long chat with her; before we left the Clubhouse she gave Bing a silver-plated ashtray with the figure of a golfer - which strangely enough resembled Bing, and he was absolutely over the moon with it. My mother has had that present for him for some time in the hope that she could give it to him personally - and she has.
>
> Her devotion to Bing and her keen-ness and knowledge of his career throughout the last 50 years often puts me to shame for she can so often correct me on details of certain recordings even though I'm 38 and have collected his records now for 23 years. She was 77 on 17 September and previously Bing wished her many happy returns on the phone while he was staying at Mr. Godfrey Bostock's home so its been quite a year for her - and me too.

Another wholly delightful story - and one which, with the above letter about Dena Curtis surely is another illustration of the whole spectrum of Crosby-admiration. We certainly add our warmest congratulations to Dena on her 13th birthday and to the incredible Mrs. Smith on overcoming a tedious journey and making such a lovely gesture to Bing. It probably pleased him as much as anything else that happened to him in Britain. And we hope Dena and all those who missed him in this great year of 1975 will have a chance to say "Hello" to Bing, perhaps in 1976.

GAYLOR'S GAZETTE

OR: LESLIE'S LETTERS!

Easily the best-known name in Britain as a Crosby admirer is the redoubtable LESLIE GAYLOR, of the Isle of Wight. His efforts have the side-effect of bring him a heavy mail - and in this connection we would ask readers who are writing to Leslie and desire a reply to enclose a stamped, addressed, envelope. His prodigious efforts have now been recognised in many important places and we are very happy that Les is prepared to share his more interesting letters with us.....

This letter was written in Bing's own hand, not typewritten, and was addressed from Claridge's on Aug 2nd last:

Dear Leslie,

You may be sure I fully appreciate the many things you have done in behalf of my English image and career. I'm sure none of it would have happened without your impetus. I can tell you also it was great fun for me working with Barnes, Moore, Drewett, Astaire and so many others. Reawakens my interest in the business . Let's hope something serious develops.

Yours
Bing.

Bing wrote again, from America, on October 17:

Yes, it certainly looks like the BBC boys and the United Artist boys did a very good job of promotion. Whether or not the album or the single ever reaches a great sale, I couldn't say, but I'm sure whatever sale it is enjoying is directly responsible to their exploitation and the hard work they did to get the word around.

Glad to know that there's a possibility that it will be heard on the Continent - which is a good break, I think.

They told me they're going to release a single of I LOVE TO DANCE which is in the album. I don't know what they're going to back it up with, but you might watch for this.

I must say the DJs have been very cooperative and very helpful in every instance, and of course a lot of this is due to your spade work.

Hope you're in good health and spirits -

Most sincerely, Bing.

On October 22 Leslie received the following from Leon Lynn, of BING CROSBY ENTERPRISES:

Dear Leslie,

Happy to get your very nice letter and a report on Bing's record albums and your many activities. In regard to Bing's proposed concert at the London Palladium - its in preparation but no definite date has been firmed.

Since returning from England he did two large shows here. One at the J. Paul Getty Museum in Malibu to a capacity crowd for mentally retarded children, and one at the Music Center for the mentally retarded. He just finished taping of Bob Hope's twenty-fifth anniversary with NBC show, an appearance on the Tonight Show and a taping on Dinah Shore's Show.

His next venture here is his "Christmas Show" taping November 17 and airing in early December. Then he does a hospital show in San Francisco for shut-ins.

This takes care of his schedule for 1975. Enclosed is a synopsis of the Dinah Shore Show. Hope all is well with you. Thanks for your letter -

Your friend,

Leo (Lynn).

The Synopsis of the Dinah Shore Show shows: Dinah and Bing duet with TRUE LOVE to open the show;....a clip from one of Bing's first movies (Mack Sennett) - Franklyn Pangborn recognises Bing when he sings BLUE OF THE NIGHT....Dinah and Bing talk about his new (London) album and Bing sings "I love to Dance" - in the middle Bing and Dinah dance a la Fred Astaire/Giner Rogers....Dinah surprises Bing with a videotaped message to Bing from Dean Martin...Pat Boone also surprises Bing by appearing on the bandstand with an imitation of Bing doing a brief medley of "When the Blue of the Night", "Cool, Cool, of the Evening", and "Swinging on a Star"...Pat describes himself as Bing's biggest fan... Bing,Phil Harris, Pat Boone and Dinah sit on stools to play a "Flip Side Quiz". Dinah sings a few bars from the "B" side of one of Bing's all-time hits and everyone tries to guess what the hit was. The answer is revealed by playing the hit side of the record; Bing sings along to the record and is joined by the others each time. In the course of guessing what hit was on the flip side everyone sings a few bars of a different Crosby favourite, and Bing describes the situation which led to recording one or two of the songs. Phil Harris then does his own quiz in which he asks everyone to guess the first ballad Bing ever recorded. As a result of the guessing, Bing sings at least part of the following songs: "From Monday On", "Mississippi Mud", "You are the One", "Please", "Let's Start the New Year Right", "June in January", "White Christmas", "In Dreams I Hold your Hand Madame", "Just a Gigolo" and "Wrap Your Troubles in Dreams". Pat Boone reads an encouraging letter Bing sent him when Pat was just starting his career, and Pat sings "Love Letters in the Sand". Bing then sings a second song from his new album, "Send in the Clowns". The finale of the show consists of all the principals doing a parody of "Well, Did you Evah?".....

Editor: Sounds terrific doesn't....the sort of thing that SHOULD be in a Bing biography - the story behind some of his great records...though the quiz would have presented no problems to 75 per cent of our members (allowing for the fact that the so-called "flip side" was liable to be different with varying issues! Must have been quite a nostalgic show for Bing. Younger and newer members of ours may not know that Bing and Dinah Shore did a great series of radio broadcasts for the Forces during the 2nd World War. One great curiosity in this connection is that Bing never recorded commercially with Dinah Shore, who was (and is) quite a big name in the States.

This run-down of Bing's activities since he returned from Britain does not include another momentous event: Bing appeared in a 50th Anniversary Concert given by the equally-legendary MILLS BROTHERS on Sunday evening Sept. 21. There was a fine picture of the three brothers with HARRY VON ZELL in the LOS ANGELES TIMES of Oct. 5. Harry Von Zell was the first network announcer of the Mills Brothers as he was indeeed for Bing himself. Other guests besides Bing for this historic concert were Helen O'Connell, Johnny Green and the Louis Bellson Orchestra. There are no details as to what Bing sang with the Mills Brothers that night. But, to return to Leslie's letters:

From CYNET FILMS LTD: Hertfordshire:

Dear Mr. Gaylor,

Thank you very much indeed for your kind letter. I am really pleased that you like the photographs. I was interested to learn from you of your deep involvement in the Bing Crosby movement in Britain. I am sure that he appreciates your efforts. Bing's visits to Bushey Studios was for the purpose of recording a commentary for a film we are currently producing on golf.

which as a dedicated Crosby fan you will appreciate is one of his favourite hobbies. Bing met various of the studio staff including Cynet's Managing Director, Rae Evans, Wilf Partington, the Production Manager, and many others. Afterwards we took him to the Moor Park Golf Club for a quiet game before returning to London.

The studio gate was busy as half a dozen press photographers waited from early morning for his arrival. Bing later met them and signed autographs for the many loyal fans, both young and old, who had turned out to see whether the rumour was true that Bing was visiting the Studio. I can add that we all thought him to be the nice guy that his imagine portrays.

Yours sincerely,
PAUL FERGUSON, Deputy Mg. Director.

From the BBC, September 24.:

Dear Leslie, I'm sorry I haven't written before but I have been away on holiday. However, just before I went I did after all manage to film Bing Crosby for the Christmas Disney Time programme. It was all at desperately short notice and there was no way of letting you know in time. In fact, it wasn't finally fixed up until the late evening before the filming day!

I told Bing that you had hoped to be there and he said he would have loved to have seen you, and sent you his best wishes. He is now, of course, in America. Anyway, I hope you can watch the programme when it finally goes out at Christmas!

Best wishes, RICHARD EVANS.

(PS) We filmed it (the Disney linking) not on the golf course but in a private house at Chiswick - complete with Xmas tree and decorations!

From BING CROSBY ENTERPRISES: Sept. 16 :

Dear Mr. Gaylor,

Many thanks for your nice letter, giving us all the information about Mr. Crosby's stay in England and the wonderful reception of his latest recording. We all think it is one of the greatest.

A SOUTHERN MEMOIR was recorded at T.T.G. Studios in Hollywood. Again many thanks for keeping us posted over here about what is going on over there - and for the clippings you send.

Sincerely,
NANCY BRIGGS.

READERS MAY LIKE TO KNOW THAT LEO LYNN HAS BEEN APPOINTED TO REPLACE THE LATE LARRY TO BE IN CHARGE OF CORRESPONDENCE AT "BING CROSBY ENTERPRISES", 170 North Robertson Boulevard, Beverly Hills, California 90211, U.S.A. (of course!)

BING'S CHRISTMAS SHOW, mentioned above, has been pre-sold to ITV for showing over here during Christmas week - maybe on Christmas Day itself. Bing's principal guest is FRED ASTAIRE and they will be doing a couple of numbers from the new album - the one referred to in the Leeds story of course, and another of Ken Barnes's enterprises. There is a whisper that the Crosby-season of films has met with some difficulty, but WHITE CHRISTMAS at least is going to be screened. The Bing/Fred LP should be riding high in the LP charts by then, it is confidently expected.

The GAYLOR GAZETTE is concluded with a message from Leslie on the next page.....

AS WE DRAW TO THE CLOSE OF by LESLIE GAYLOR :

AN EVENTFUL YEAR

An eventful year indeed; perhaps that is an understatement and I will be forgiven if I refer to 1975 as a truly fantastic year. Looking back perhaps we will be forgiven too, for repeating that for Crosby events this dying year must have been the most fruitful ever for Crosby admirers - I mean, of course, those in the British Isles , tho' I feel certain that the fans in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and on the Continent of Europe as well as those in Bing's own homeland, the United States, will have basked in the knowledge that Crosbyana had received such a resurgence of interest the world over because of what happened here.

> Because here we have felt the full impact, all the wonderful excitement, of having Bing here for such a long and event-crammed visit. And firstly of course I must thank The Master himself who, happily I am certain, carried out a programme in this country that would have put many a younger man "on his back". And in this connection this might be a good point at which to refer to the anxiety of many members that Bing may have undertaken too much and over-tired himself. I think the answer to that - understandable as that feeling was - is in Bing's activities in the States since he, reluctantly I am certain, left us. Clearly far from unduly fatiguing himself Bing seems to have gained impetus for his "home-ground" appearances!

I make no apologies for again, in this end-year round-up, bringing in the name that has become so familiar to us in 1975 - that of Ken Barnes who must be largely responsible for the very happy circumstance that the shops now seem full of Crosby albums, with, of course, more to come. I'm sure that Ken has figured extensively elsewhere in this issue and rightly so. With Ken's name we must couple that of Pete Moore who found himself faced not only with the task of making a whole host of musical arrangements for the King of popular singers but had to do them at a speed far in advance of the work-rate usually set musical arrangers. And what a job he did; the more one listens to THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT one realises the masterly touch. The speed with which these two Bing albums (one to come, and the Astaire duets also to come) were conceived and executed in quite amazing time and little imagination is needed to realise just what spade-work both Ken Barnes and Pete Moore had to put in. It was a great year for me personally to meet these two fine fellas. And as a result of the whole project it came about that I was able to visit UNITED ARTISTS who, of course, undertook the presentation and marketing of these new recordings. There I had the great pleasure of meeting none other than Mr. Alan Warner who turned out to be not only a man who knew all about selling records - but also a lot about Bing! I have since developed a fine association with Mr. Warner. He, with Martin Davis of UNITED ARTISTS, were mainly responsible for the "backing" Ken Barnes had in his Crosby-recording project.

> There has been an endless stream of mail dropping thro' my letter box and without exception they express great appreciation of THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT. And by the time this is being read the "Astaire" album will be spinning on your turntables. It is a great album - but that is no guarantee of success in these odd days(!)so may I earnestly suggest that if it costs you your last 6½p stamp to request tracks from the album on your favourite (no come to that, even your NON-favourite record progtammes and dee-jays), drop a line to record reviewers with a view to getting the album known. Once it is know - it will automatically be the success it deserves. This is one way to assist towards more Crosby recording in this country - and let me say I am aware that members have been doing sterling work in this direction,

Furthermore, there is every reason to believe that Decca will be putting out S SOUTHERN MEMOIR, the album produced by BING CROSBY ENTERPRISES in January of this year. The songs

on this include GEORGIA ON MY MIND, SAILING DOWN THE CHESAPEAKE BAY, CRYING FOR THE CAROLINES, S..ANEE, ON THE ALAMO, and SHE IS THE SUNSHINE OF VIRGINIA. Discographers, by the way, may like to know that NO master numbers were allocated for the songs on this "Southern" album, nor were any allocated to the songs Bing has done for United Artists.

Many other people have, of course, contributed to this great Crosby year; The Parkinson TV people did a tremendous job, as did the radio people, both National and local - people like Pete Murray, Terry Wogan, Brian Willey and many others. Then there were the STARS ON SUNDAY people - and readers will have noted that Bing made two further appearances on this IYV Sunday evening show, with Bible readings which, it appears, were very much appreciated.

> And of course, the British press on all levels afforded Bing their usual benevolence and gave Bing's activities tremendous coverage.

I must single out Brian Willey in particular of the BBC. Brian produced the 14-week BBC radio series and also the excellent August Bank Holiday programme. And now another item of news for Christmas. Brian has pulled off something of a scoop for in a letter dated November 12 he tells me:

> During the taping of Bing's Christmas Show next week, November 20, 21 and 22, Bing will be also recording a radio programme for the BBC to be transmitted on CHRISTMAS DAY. The programme will involve the Crosby family as well and will be totally devoted to his recordings of songs associated with Christmas and winter generally. All being well the intended transmission time is 10am to 11.30 am on Radio 2 Christmas morning. So, with WHITE CHRISTMAS, the film, Disney Time, as well as the new albums no doubt being featured on the air we will be assured of plenty of Bing right to the end of this remarkable year.

Finally, may I thank all the people who have written to me. It would be a tremendous task for me to answer so many, but I would like to thank the writers most sincerely and say that I always read the views and opinions expressed with the greatest interest.

To all in Britain I wish A HAPPY CHRISTMAS and 1975 - only the latter, alas, to those abroad who also do a tremendous job in keeping the Crosby flag flying in these "modern" days, for this issue will reach them too late for Christmas. With you all, I hope 1976 will be another wonderful Bing year. And that certainly includes those two great "gals" Pat Sullivan and Priscilla Koernig for keeping BINGANG going. Its great.....

I'm sure I speak for all members of the ICC (says the Editor!) when WE thank Leslie for all he has done. He must surely have reached the summit after all his years of indefatigable Bing-boosting. And we have shared that pleasure. Thanks again Leslie!

MEMBERS WILL HAVE BEEN WELL AWARE THAT PAPERS AND MAGAZINES HAVE BEEN PROMINENTLY FEATURING BING STORIES - THE GUARDIAN carried an excellent one, and no doubt everyone saw THE SUNDAY TIMES feature. "MUSIC WEEK", which is the record dealers' trade magazine and not always freely available to the general public, carried a 6-page tribute to Bing's 50 years in show business. Ken Barnes and Peter Jones compiled the features - and the Crosby office thought it was all particularly well done. EMI pamphlets issued to record dealers have been carrying excellent stories on Bing, particularly No. 40 which dealt with the very welcome reissue of Bing's album THE GREAT COUNTRY HITS, while No. 41 dealt fulsomely with BING SINGS THE GREAT SONGS.

And Harvey Smith noted for a quite uncouth V-sign, and riding horses over jumps, has recorded TRUE LOVE! But what a choice! What a way to draw the utmost attention to one's inadequacies to sing a tremendous hit song of Bing's. And in answer to several humorous readers: NO, I think there is no chance that we will see Bing participating in the HORSE OF THE YEAR SHOW as a reciprocal gesture!

We would not expect most reviewers to review THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT in the way we did - tho' come to think of it, Bert Bishop was quite objective. And we grant reviwers the right to their opinions but if anyone missed the following appeared in a weekly paper called SOUNDS, on October 25, and it must surely take some kind of biscuit:

"BING CROSBY: THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT (UAG 29730) (41.44 mins.).

THIS ALBUM does suffer from a Transatlantic two-way stretch. A weedy British orchestra is not the best setting for the veteran's still rich and mahogany tones, nor does it always seem in accord with the aged swinger's immaculate sense of timing. Recording his jolly duets with Johnny Mercer in California, while the band played in Britain, was also disappointing seeming to disembody and dishearten the frothy repartee which made pieces like HIGH SOCIETY immortal. However, the man himself is in astonishing nick. Buy it for your mum and she may never say "I do wish you would get your hair cut again".----

Phil Sucliffe.

Whoever Mr. Sutcliffe is I feel he has perpetrated a gross libel, even allowing as I said above, for the individual views of reviewers - odd as some of them may be. But this isn't odd. It is disgraceful. I refer to the description of "A weedy British orchestra....."

With what kind of cloth ears did Mr. Sutcliffe listen (if that is the word) to this album? Can it be he heard the tracks that were broadcast only and that on a £1.50 transistor set? But no, even that could not hide the great sounds of Pete Moore's orchestra. I shall not enlarge further - it must be totally unnecessary. Perhaps another review in the same publication, though NOT by Mr. Sutcliffe, contains the immortal phrase and puts the whole publication in what may be its true light: referring to another well-sung album it says:

"....I know its not rock and roll, but I like it." Magnanimity indeed, Sir!

It was DICK PEARSON (who happens to be in the business!) who drew this to my attention, and Dick has recently received a most interesting letter from Mr. C.:-

Dear Mr. Pearson,

Thank you for your most kind letter. I certainly am happy that you enjoyed the Parkinson Show and the Vera Lynn Show, too. I never got to see that, but maybe if they still have a tape I can see it when I come back next spring.

I have the Disney Christmas Show which I narrated coming up later on, and I also did a record which is sort of a departure.

THEY'RE MAKING ALBUMS OF SOME OF THE OLD LITERARY CLASSICS, AND I DID A READING OF TOM SAWYER - famous story by Mark Twain. It will be a big album, I guess, because the thing runs probably 30-40 minutes, or maybe more, I don't know.

I'm sorry we didn't get to see one another, so I could have autographed your albums, but we'll do it next time, as you say. Delighted to hear about the progress the album and single are making on the charts over there, and I hope that the momentum doesn't subside!

I really don't think - although its a good song - that "That's What Life is All About" is the kind of a song that will find popular appeal. Its more or less for a single singer. There's no love involved or anything else of that character to make for popularity. Its just sort of a reminiscence. But you never can tell.

You're right about "As Time Goes By". I've sung it many times on the radio

and I'm surprised nobody has an old recording of it. I also always used to sing it in my act. I knew the writer very well.

Thanks for your letter. Glad that you like Dick Francis. I go way back to his first issue. In fact, I think they used some of my comments in some of their publicity. He writes real good thrillers about the race-track and, of course, that's a fond area of mine -

Sincere regards,

BING
(Bing Crosby).

Comments Dick: What a charming man Bing is, and obviously reads the letters people send as I made only the vaguest reference to Dick Francis yet he picked that up. Its nice too, to hear that he will be back in the spring. United Artists tell me that Dec. 5 is the scheduled release date for the Bing/Astaire album...they also say they are planning a large advertising campaign for the LIFE album pre-Christmas so we may even see a TV commercial! I have seen the album as high as No.17 in the LP charts....the second single is getting a lot of plays and I was delighted to see that RECORD MIRROR featured it as number one on the writers' charting.

The RECORD MIRROR note read: I LOVE TO DANCE LIKE THEY U ED TO DANCE: A gift for MoR DJs, this happy lilter has to be the best easy listening dancer since Dance in the Old Fashioned Way. Thanx for making life a little easier, Bing! (NB: MoR = Middle of the Road! Bing does, as Dick remarks, certainly read the letters sent to him.

THAT'S M'BOY! | At least, its Mrs. Eileen Knight's boy we're meaning, for Eileen wrote:

My son Philip is now a member of the ICC, as you know he always loved Bing's records. He is working in London now and a few weeks ago he saw a window display promoting Bing's new LP and in the centre was a large photograph of Bing with Parkinson. It is about 5ft by 3ft. In the shop he went and asked if he could possibly have the photo when they had done with it. Certainly said the man in charge. And on a subsequent Friday night Philip went along to fetch it. Having got it, he carried it all across London, including Piccadilly Circus and Trafalgar Square...the wind kept catching it like a sail and to add to my son's difficulties, people were so interested they were ducking and bending sideways to catch a glimpse of what and of who it was and he felt he had to help them by turning it up the right way. He then got on the Tube to London Bridge, then the Southern line to Beckenham on his way to night-school. When that was over it was back across London again still lovingly clutching this enormous picture of Bing, to the Victoria Coach Station. And, of course, he came the 120 miles up the M1 home ...with this picture for me! Its a really enormous thing and covers the whole of the chimney breast in the sitting-room, and is quite a talking point with visitors! Also, Philip has bought me Bing's autobiography set for my birthday which was very nice of him. I do wish Philip had met Bing..it would have given him such a thrill."

Editor: Well, if you saw this young man of 17 staggering around London you know now it was Philip Knight, 57 Burlington Rd. West Bromwich, B70 6LE (when he's at home and not at his bank job in the City). A son to be proud of indeed.....I recall meeting him when he was a little lad, and his pretty sister, Christine - not to mention Mum and Dad (Ron Knight) and I'm delighted he has inherited his mother's great fondness for Bing.

And if Philip didn't get the chance to meet Bing last Summer....when Bing has read this letter - surely a "star" letter! - I'm sure he'll be delighted to meet young Philip on his next visit here.

He certainly deserved to get that picture! Home!

IN MEMORIAM:

JOHN SCOTT TROTTER

John Scott Trotter died on Wednesday, October 29 at Cedars-Sinai Hospital after a brief illness at the age of 67, for he was born on June 14, 1908. With the death of John Scott there passes from the scene one of the major personalities whose name is indissolubly linked with Bing's tremendous gramophone record career. No-one who has ever bought a Crosby record, every last million of them, has automatically associated Bing with John Scott Trotter. And yet, curiously, despite this very little was known of him by the general public. As well as appearing for 17 years on those familiar Brunswick labels J.S.T. also accompanied, with his orchestra, Bing Crosby on hundreds, if not thousands, of his radio broadcasts.

When the Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra, the original accompanists, found it necessary to pursue its own career across the States, the name of John Scott Trotter was recalled as a brilliant arranger as well as pianist with the then famous Hal Kemp Orchestra. He was sent for and began his long association with Bing in the Kraft Music Hall in 1937.

> Of the hundred or so musical directors who have been associated with Bing in his tremendous career John Scott Trotter must stand out - as Everest stands out over other mountains as Bing once said of Paul Whiteman and his stature in the band world. The name of J.S.T. appeared on no less than 333 sides between 1937 and December, 1954.
>
> It appears that the first side was ITS THE NATURAL THING TO DO, with ALL YOU WANT TO DO IS DANCE, THE MOON GOT IN MY EYES, and SMALL FRY, all recorded on July 12, 1937. Seventeen years and more later the association came to a close with LIZA and IN THE GOOD OLD SUMMERTIME, recorded on May 21, 1954. One further issue was made with J.S.T. directing in December 1954 - NOBODY - but that was taken from a Philco Radio Show of April 2, 1947 and not re-recorded for the Brunswick issue. It would seem this was the end of Bing's marathon Decca (Brunswick here) career, too.

It would be easy to say that John Scott Trotter arranged and conducted the accompaniment for WHITE CHRISTMAS, the world's largest selling record of all time - and Mr. Trotter's name is assured of a place in recording history. But that is much too facile. Just glance through - if such a thing is possible - through the 333 songs that featured the arranging and conducting of J.S.T. and the mind boggles at the enormity of the task that was set him when he was called to the Crosby musical "family" - as Bing puts it in CALL ME LUCKY. Month after month, year after year, all those songs to be attractively and musically presented. And can it be said John Scott Trotter ever failed?

Just once or twice I've heard the comment that Bing's continuing issues over that long period became stereotyped as regards arrangement. Well, as Bing has pointed out, in that period songs were constructed differently - eight bars, eight bars, middle bridge of eight, and final eight bars. With very few exceptions indeed. So, ring the changes how one might, in such a career there had to be a limit to the permutations of arranging "tricks". But if there was music to complement the famous Crosby voice, assuredly John Scott Trotter knew how to arrange it. The strings were always glorious - invidious to pick out any numbers from that vast number; brass was always used with incredible taste. The muted trombones on so many Crosby/Trotter records are a sheer delight to me.

John Scott Trotter's career spanned 50 years which began in Charlotte, N.C. as stated above, as arranger and pianist for the Hal Kemp Orchestra. He by no means retired when his Crosby association ended in 1954. He continued recording for Decca and Warner's and scored and conducted for motion pictures as well as television. Only recently he received an Academy Award and "Emmy" award nomination for

his work on the "PEANUTS" films and specials. He was a member of the Board of Directors and was past President of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences; a member of the Board of the Orange County Philharmonic Society, and a past national trustee of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences.

He is survived by a sister, Mrs. Margaret Kinghorn of Laguna Hills; three brothers, Thomas and William of Charlotteville, and Robert of New Haven, Connecticut.

Although best known for his commercial or popular work, especially his contribution to the Crosby story, John Scott Trotter was a life-long devotee of classical music; and as a raconteur he presided over numerous previews of symphonic concerts and as guest conductor he led concerts of, among other symphonic organisations, the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl and the orchestras of Glendale, Pasadena, and San Diego. That he was a true and outstanding musician is apparent from his work so readily available to us on Crosby records.

He was seen fleetingly, in one or two Crosby films. A figure of some girth and noted as a gourmet and solid trencherman!

John Scott had visited Britain thought not, as far as is known, with Bing. At least one of our members, DEREK PARKES of Salisbury (already mentioned in the Leeds feature as one of the compilers of THE ROAD TO BING CROSBY discography) met Mr. Trotter:

> "I was fortunate enough to meet John Scott....I had breakfast with him at the Cavendish Hotel in London and right from the very first I felt as though I were a life-long friend of his. A most amiable and gentlemanly character, he spoke quite freely of his long experience with Bing and confided to me little incidents which are not generally known. One felt one was indeed talking to a tangible Crosby personality - as indeed, one was! After breakfast, he took me to his suite and I was astonished to be handed by John Scott an unfinished letter he was writing to my great American friend, Eddie Rice. 'Write a few words on that Derek,' said John, 'while I get changed'!
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> Some time later, I learned he was in London again and I spoke to him on the phone. 'Gee, I'm sorry,' he exclaimed, 'my schedule is too full to see you this time Derek' - I hadn't suggested a meeting, aware that he would be busy. 'I'll be back in the fall,' he added and then we can have a meal together and another long chat.'
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> And as a matter of fact, he did come back here in the autumn of that year and I afterwards learned he had made quite strenuous efforts to trace me but in those days I wasn't on the phone and he drew a blank - to my great regret. I did subsequently frequently receive a few words and keepsakes from him via Geoff. Milne of Decca - but I never had an explanation of this...but it was a great privilege to meet John Scott Trotter." - Derek Parkes.

In his book CALL ME LUCK, Bing wrote of John Scott:

> John Scott Trotter joined my musical family at the beginning of my Kraft Music Hall series in the 1930s. He's been with me ever since. (The book was written up to 1953 - Ed.) I'd known John in New York when he played piano and made arrangements for the Hal Kemp band. Both Hal and Johnny were products of the University of North Carolina. John—as everybody who listned to our radio program knows—goes about two hundred ninety-five pounds (a shade over 21 stone - Ed). For a bandleader he has remarkable self-control. Never have I heard him resort to profanity during the long, tiresome, rehearsals. Things can go wrong with an arrangement. Musicians are late or maybe hung a little. After five or six hours, they often get fidgety and restless, or their attention wanders. But I've never heard John raise his voice or upbraid his

musicians. Once, when they really got out of line, he rapped with his baton and said, in cool, crisp, tones, "Gentlemen!" The bandsmen were so shocked that he'd said anything at all that they calmed down and he had no more trouble with them."

Clearly John Scott Trotter contributed more than music to those marathon recording sessions. A memorial service was held at Westwood Memorial Park Chapel on Nov. 8 A melancholy intrusion into our Christmas issue; but the Great Reaper is no respecter of seasons.....

The Editor with Assistance from Derek Parkes.

"BING" TAPE SERVICE:

Operating in conjunction with the ICC, the BING TAPE SERVICE provides members with the opportunity of acquiring high-quality tapes (open-reel or cassette) of virtually anything ever sung or spoken by Bing Crosby into a microphone during the course of his long and varied career. Strict legal copyright clauses are applicable to the indiscriminate re-recording of certain items but these special facilities are available via the ICC without offending anyone.

All tapings are fully guaranteed and recorded dual-track (if open reel) with a choice of speed and spool size to suit the individual facilities of members. Delivery is usually within 21 days of receipt of order and payment. Naturally it is hardly realistic to request, say, just one number or song. A suitably-sized tape can usually be compiled at members' requests. A tape-recorder, orthodox or cassette, would seem to be a necessity for the complete Crosby collector!

Further information on material available can be obtained by sending to the following address ENCLOSING SAE:

BOB ROBERTS,
56 THOROLD ROAD,
CHATHAM, KENT. (England of course, if overseas)

This tremendous facility does not, of course, preclude members from making friendly contacts with one another when tape-exchanging to mutual benefit can be arranged, but Bob Roberts (included in the GUINNESS BOOK OF RECORDS as the greatest Crosby collector) is the unfailing authority.

AN INTRIGUING LETTER FROM . . . . . JACK LISTER, 1 Harley Bank, Low Bentham, Lancaster, LA2 7BU

Can anyone tell me how to obtain a copy of a 78rpm record which I KNOW has existed. As ship's DJ (RN) I bought for an relayed this to the ship's company in 1943 - and I've never heard it since. It is a recording of WHITE CHRISTMAS (on Brunswick) I believe, but not the recording with which we have all become so familiar in recent years which is simply the well known chorus and nothing else. The one I seek has a verse, the lyrics and melody of which are firmly embedded in my memory and I feel and hope that at some time it must have been re-issued and that some member will know of this and maybe, had I not been a new recruit to the Circle, I too would know more about it. I would welcome your comments.

Editor: This has me foxed completely - but then, I'm falling back on our wealth of discographical experts. Even so, I shall be surprised if there was such a record - and this is no reflection on Jack's memory which, as applies to all of us, is fallible. If Jack hadn't said it was a Brunswick I would have hazarded a guess at a V-Disc - but they were 12" usually. WHITE CHRISTMAS with a verse.....I shall await comments or ideas as keenly as Jack Lister. Perhaps he'll tell us more about his DJ days in the Royal Navy; they must have some Crosby overtones!

The "bible" THE ROAD TO BING CROSBY says nothing about such an issue - only the ones with which, as Jack says, we have all become so familiar - and which we are all busy giving a special airing to at this particular time!

KEEPING TRACK

by BERT BISHOP

In this popular feature, Bert deals with Crosby records, both new and reissued. Owing to pressure on space in the last issue the new album and the package from WORLD RECORDS were discussed but certain other items were held over; they are presented now as it is essential to keep abreast of every such issue. It will be recalled that the last issue necessarily featured the personal stories of many members who met Bing and attended the Parkinson Show recording.

By common consent, this has been an exceptionally fulsome year for Crosbyana. And the record-release scene has been as fulsome as any. Much of this, as you will have noted, would have appeared in issue No. 39 last September but for exceptional circumstances. To business!

A further release of BING CROSBY & THE ANDREWS SISTERS comprising 28 titles on a 2-LP set is available on MCA CORAL CDMSP 804 at the budget price of £2.93. I am advised that these reissues of earlier Coral tracks are in mono; though the "S" in the Cat. No. is misleading. The folded sleeve has an orange background with photographs of the four artistes featured on the front of the outer sleeve. Bing is centrally-placed in the lower section of the picture and is pointing upward with his left forefinger to the three gals pictured in the upper section in a head-to-hips photo! Noel Hendrick has written the sleeve notes, and these can be found on the left-hand inner sleeve with, facing them on the right hand, the song titles. These are repeated on the rear of the sleeve which shows a little lack of imagination on the part of the designer. Full list of contents is as follows:

CDLM 8041	Don't Fence Me In.	Have I Told you Lately That I love You?
	Sth. Rampart St. Parade.	Life is so Peculiar.
	Pistol Packin' Mama.	I'll Si-Si ya in Bahia.
	The Three Caballeros.	Along the Navajo Trail.
	Yodellin' Jive.	The Yodelling Ghost.
	At the Flying "W".	Ask me no Questions.
	Quicksilver.	Black Ball Ferry Line.
CDLM 8042	You Don't Have to Know the Language)	Tallahassee.
	Is You is or is you Aint My Baby?	South America, Take it Away!
	Ciribiribin.	Go West, Young Man.
	Cool Water.	Anything you can Do. (+)
	Sparrow in the Treetops.	Ac-cent-chu-ate the Positive.
	High on the List.	Apalachioola, FLA.
	There's a Fella Waiting in Poughkeepsie.	There's no Business like Show Business (+)

(+) with Dick Haymes too, of course.

Italian JOKER have put out another Bing LP; this time featuring him and Frank Sinatra with radio show material. The album is FRANK SINATRA AND BING CROSBY, SM3612, and being an import will only be available through record dealers such as Harlequin and Dave Carey at "The Swing Shop" and possibly HMV shops. The eye is attracted to the sleeve by a blonde in white walking past a ramshackle building: a visual contrast that serves its purpose even if it bears no relation to the featured stars or song content which reads:

Side 1:	Granada	BING	Young at Heart	SINATRA.
	Take a Chance	SINATRA.	Imagination.	BING.
	Among my Souvenirs.	DUET.	Till we Meet Again.	SINATRA.
	September Song.	BING.	Meet me tonight in Dreamland.	BING
	As Time Goes By.	DUET.	Its A Long, Long Trail	DUET.
	Someone Lovelier than you.	BING.	Wanted	BING.

As Bing can he heard on nine of the 12 tracks (including the duets) this is a good LP to track down; and interesting diversion in itself! The Editor tells me - and I remember reading it - we have a member, DANNY QUINN in Florence who no doubt has snapped up this LP. Tracking this album down could be an interesting diversion in itself!

this LP. Tracking it down over here could be an interesting diversion in itself!

If you can stand it there is yet another reissue of BING SINGS WHILST BREGMAN SWINGS under the title of THE SPECIAL MAGIC OF BING CROSBY. Australian METRO 2356-141. This version features all the original 12 tracks; too well known to list here! Newer fellas are invited to refer to THE BING CROSBY LP-OGRAPHY (an updated and extensively revised edition is to be published by the ICC in the near future) for song titles.

From Canada comes K-TEL INTERNATIONAL NC-417 "SUPER BLOOPERS"; this is an equivalent of the US "BLOOPERS" album which features Bing's most famous fluff, WRAP YOUR TROUBLES IN DREAMS. Again, this will only be available in the UK through specialist shops. Overseas members not resident in Canada are advised to go through American contacts for this LP should be readily available in the States.

Of academic interest to Bing fans is the news of ALL THAT JAZZ DJLMD 8001 U.K. PYE, which features Louis Armstrong on a 2-LP set comprising Satchmo's "All-Stars" as featured on radio shows. Two tracks come from the Chesterfield Show during Bing's tenure as host: Jan. 18, 1950, ROYAL GARDEN BLUES and March 16, 1949, PANAMA. This is not an equivalent of the Sagapan nor Windmill issues on which Bing was featured, nor is he to be heard on this latest album.

An LP certainly well worth the reissue is EL SENOR BING which features Bing singing 20 tracks with the Billy May Orchestra; vintage 1960. This has transpired with the release of BING GOES LATIN: MGM 2354-028 which is a nicely produced stereo collection at budget price. It is also available on Musicassette 3140-106, and 8-track Cartridge 3789-005. The sleeve is brick-red with plain block lettering in white. Front sleeve shows a mid-Thirties Bing shouldering a golf club in a head-and-shoulders photograph of some rarity. Another sleeve which scarcely matches the age and content of the recordings which are very nice arrangements of good old standards with a universal appeal though with, perhaps, no authentic Latin nuances. The titles are:

Side 1: In the Still of the Night.
I Could have Danced All Night
C'Est Magnifique.
Taking a Chance on Love.
Heavenly Night.
My Shawl.
Marta.
The Rose in her Hair.
How High the Moon.
Old Devil Moon.

Side 2: Pagan Love Song.
Cuban Love Song.
Ramona.
Amapola.
Malaguena.
Andalucia.
Down Argentina Way.
What a Difference a Day Made.
Again.
Allez-vous-en, Go Away.

Newer and younger members will not, perhaps, know that the format followed is two titles per track, hence 20 titles.

German MCA CORAL 6.28315 BRING BACK THE GOOD OLD TIMES (believed to be the title could be BACK TO THE GOOD OLD TIMES) is a 2-LP collection manufactured by Teldec (Telefunken-Decca) of The Dorsey Brothers, the famous orchestra Bing recorded with during its hey-day. A rather miniscule amount of Bing insofar as there are only two tracks on Side 2 of the second record - "Two for Tonight" and "I Wished On the Moon". Beautiful songs by Bing - but an expensive package unless you're also a Dorseys fan.

A rather important LP has been released on the French RCA Original Victor Recordings Black and White Series with THE BIX BEIDERBECKE LEBEND "Alternative Bix-Bis" Vol. 5 (1926-1928) FXM1 7092 Vol. 135. A lengthy title and lead-in to a fascinating collection of 17 Bix tracks of which eight feature Bing; two of them being described as "Unissued Take". True, up to a point, but Take -1 of "It Was the Dawn of Love" has been released on the pirate Broadway LP, THE UNHEARD BIX. However, it can be safely assumed that no previous recording has featured Take -2 of "Metropolis Pt.3". This is an unusual Whiteman recording, it being the work of composer-arranger Ferdie Grofe. Not one of his best for it is a hotch-potch of styles based on contemporary composers, and the dissimilarity does not engender cohesion. The fact remains, though, that no Crosby collection can be complete without this item whether the previously issued Take -4 or this latest release.

From the sleeve-notes - a translation is given - it would seem that this is the last LP in this "Bix" series of which Vols. 1 and 2 in a 2-LP album gave us eight different songs or "takes". The sleeve frontispiece shows a small, circular inset photo of Bix supplanting a 78 Victor label, the 78 being housed in an original sleeve showing Whiteman and his Orchestra in drawn silhouette beneath which are the titles. The rear of the sleeve is chock-full with every conceivable piece of information, in French and English. A very well-produced album, of which the Bing details are:

Side One:	Ol' Man River	41607-2	Side Two:	There Ain't No Sweet Man	41681-3
	Make Believe	41470-5		From Monday On.	41689-4
			(Unissued)	Metropolis Pt. 3	43143-2
				My Pet.	43662-1
				My Pet.	43662-2
				It Was the Dawn of Love.	43663-1

Of further interest is the fact that take -2 of "My Pet" and take -4 of "From Monday on" are quite rare on microgroove; and it may also be noted that contrary to all previous information Bing's partners in song on "My Pet" are given as Rinker, Fulton and Gaylord; in other words Jack Fulton instead of Austin "Skin" Young. Discographical comment invited on this aspect!

SO TO CHRISTMAS..... Bing and Christmas are virtually synonymous. In the English-speaking world "and points beyond", one can scarcely think of Christmas without Bing, and only to a slightly lesser degree, the reverse is true. Whilst accepting that the Yuletide was firmly cemented in 1942 with THAT record we must not lose sight of the fact that Bing had been involved with Christmas carols since 1928. Nor must we forget the little matter of the other multi-million seller, "Adeste Fidelis"/"Silent Night".... first recorded in 1935 with other versions since. Now the list of Christmas carols or songs is legion. And here we are at another festive season and although there are no new specially-festive songs to celebrate we do have the MCA "WHITE CHRISTMAS" LP (MCF 2568) still readily available, plus a host of brand-new non-Christmas numbers and truly excellent reissue packages to keep the old Bing magic circulating on your Christmas morning turntables.

So requested has been the song "I Love to Dance Like They Used To Dance" that United Artists decided to pull a second single from the LP "THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT" by issuing that track backed with "The Good old Times". Its a likeable coupling and the number is UP36025 - in stereo, of course. Two singles from the one LP is not all that common, but it has not halted the progress of the LP which reached 17 in the LP charts.

"DOESN'T TIME FLY WHEN YOU'RE ENJOYING YOURSELF" runs the caption to MCA's congratulatory advertisement in MUSIC WEEK, Sept. 27 issue, relating to Bing's anniversary year. Apart from the "WHITE CHRISTMAS" LP there is also illustrated THE BEST OF BING MCF2540, BING - A MUSICAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY CDMSP 801 in a new picture box, and a brand-new collection of no less than "20 classic tracks" as they are called, on an LP entitled BING SINGS THE GREAT SONGS, MCFM 2721 Mono, and featuring the following titles:

1. On the Sunny Side of the Street.
2. I've Told Ev'ry Little Star.
3. Just One of those Things.
4. Night and Day.
5. But Not for Me.
6. Nobody's Sweetheart.
7. Embraceable You.
8. Ain't Misbehavin'
9. I Ain't Got Nobody.
10. Tea for Two (with Connee Boswell)

1. When Day is Done.
2. Somebody Loves Me (1939)
3. The Birth of the Blues.
4. My Buddy.
5. The Folks Who live on the Hill.
6. I Found a Million Dollar Baby (1940)
7. I Cried for You.
8. Someday Sweetheart.
9. Summertime.
10. I Got Plenty O' Nuttin'.

It is only fair to point (even at Christmas!) that the first title on the first side has, to say the least, been the subject of considerable controversy.....it has, for instance, often been named as Bing's wor....I won't say THAT: Bing's most "unacceptable" record, judged by his own fantastic standards!

The period of these songs runs from 1934 to 1952, centering on the 40s, and featuring 12 different orchestral line-ups, with one duet. It is an extremely representative selection of good standards sung by Bing that have not, in the main, been available too freely on LP. You could select a dozen songs here for one ordinary LP (an ordinary LP being 10 or 12 titles) that would come quite new to microgroove for many members, and that can't be bad when there's another eight thrown it for good measure. This album has been especially produced for Bing's anniversary year and carries a well-written appreciation by Nigel Hunter that is a cut above the average sleeve note. The record label features the usual rainbow motif, there are no inaccuracies and the sound transference is monoaurally excellent. However, the sleeve is fairly fragile and though it sports a large pleasant photograph of Bing as he was in the 30s it has a definite "budget price" feel about it without being in that fiscal category. But, let us be more concerned with the contents for that is, of course, where the real pleasure lies.

Congratulations, then, to MCA on this issue and for the three other collections currently available (all of them on tape also except the AUTOBIOGRAPHY set), making 140 tracks in all to say nothing of Bing's spoken introductions to 88 of them!

RCA ARE WELL TO THE FORE in the same edition of MUSIC WEEK, congratulating "Bing Crosby on 50 Fantastic years in show business". Whilst RCA LSA 3094 "WRAP YOUR TROUBLES IN DREAMS" is noted as being still available, the prime feature of that advertisement is a totally new concept in re-issues called:

"THIS IS.....BING CROSBY" (RCA DPS2066, Stereo)

In this package we have two albums recorded within 18 months of each other - February '57 and July-Aug 1958 - intermingled in a unique pot-pourri of musically enthusiastic flirtation and adventure, guaranteed to spark a love affair from first to last! This is a Ken Barnes reissue production and has his professional stamp on it throughout - and that includes astutely written credits "About the Man" and "About the Music". It was a happy inspiration to mingle the two albums instead of making "straight" transfers of the 2 albums as they were originally issued, I feel. The two albums being, of course, BING WITH A BEAT, featuring Bob Scobey's 'Frisco Jazz Band, and "FANCY MEETING YOU HERE", which also starred Rosemary Clooney with music by Billy May and Buddy Cole. Individually, they were great LPs; presented like this they are superb!

> The love/travel themes are nicely interwoven even though the songs do not follow quite the pattern that Ken intended: thus we have what should have been the concluding song, "Mama Loves Papa" terminating side 3. Each of the 24 songs has its own credits relating to the period, style, and presentation; and this adds to the quality of the double spread folder, handsome throughout. The external covers have a deep azure blue background and are illustrated with two large colour photographs of Bing in casual clothes, including his now-famous "Champions" headgear and, along with the smaller black-&-white photo inside, depict him in merry mood, being the Parkinson rehearsal pictures, courtesy of the BBC.

There are a few minor errors - Bill Scobey (once) and no mention of Buddy Cole nor the August 1958 recording dates; but all in all this is a handsome sleeve to complement a distinguished musical collation, and truly deserves the triangular silver sticker on the frontispiece bearing the legend, "RCA PROUDLY CELEBRATES BING'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY IN SHOW BUSINESS".

Before listing the track sequence it should be noted that the Bing/Rosie tracks were all originally recorded in stereo (tho' mono LPs were available on first release) whereas the BING WITH A BEAT tracks ("Mack the Knife" omitted here) are "enhanced for stereo". This has been affected exceptionally well, and without any "echo" added, and whilst it would be foolish to say "you can't see the join", the disparity is minimal. Yes, a double album well worth £3.75p and certainly an attractive and stylish addition to the record shops, so many of which are once again sporting a special "CROSBY" section again. It is felt that those who already have the two albums separately - and that will be a large percentage of us - should not be put off acquiring this (yet another Christmas present?) for the variation in title sequence gives it an added freshness.

Titles on the RCA "double" are:

Record One:

Some Sunny Day.
Down Among the Sheltering Palms.
I Can't Get Started.
Whispering.
On A Slow Boat to China.
Along the Way to Waikiki.
Let A Smile be your Umbrella.
Fanc Meeting You Here.
Brazil.
Dream a little Dream of Me.
How About You?
Love Won't Let You Get Away.

Record Two:

It Happened in Monterey.
Calcultta.
Last Night on the Back Porch.
Say "si-si".
Love Won't Let You Get Away (reprise)
Mama Loves Papa.
Hindustan.
Tell Me.
You Came a long way from St. Louis.
I'm Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Isle of Capri. (Letter.
Exactly Like You.

Not to be outdone, it would seem, the Capitol branch of EMI have reissued on their VINE series "THE GREAT COUNTRY HITS" now catalogued as VMP 1004 Stereo. On spine and back of sleeve "BING CROSBY" follows the main title rather than being an incorporate precedent of the title as for the original release.

This has always been a very popular collection and stemming as it does from 1963 sets Bing very firmly down in the Nashville Tennessee area at a comfortable age and in deeply traditional style. The musical accompaniment of Bill Justis and a tasteful chorus add considerably to a truly specialised album unique, also, in the fact that it was recorded all in one day's work. I believe that only the "NEW TRICKS" album can match this.

Its contained in another thin card sleeve, I'm afraid. And it sports a garishly colourful pastiche painting of Bing by one D. Dragon, and dated 1975. Head and shoulders, and in cowboy gear, it comes across as a good likeness of the subject even if, objectively, it is aesthetically lacking - and why should we not have artistic sleeves? The original sleeve notes are reproduced intact; cosily informative and uncredited. For £1.99 you get:

1. Oh! Lonesome Me.
2. Heartaches by the Number.
3. Four Walls.
4. Crazy Arms.
5. Bouquet of Roses.
6. Wabash Cannon Ball.
1. Wolverton Mountain.
2. Hello Walls!
3. A Little Bitty Tear.
4. Jealous Heart.
5. Still.
6. Sunflower.

These then are the titles of the album considered by many to be Bing's best of "recent" years; all well known numbers and here so richly preserved by our vocalist of many parts that to file this record under POPULAR: Male Vocal, as the sleeve invites, would suggest confusion with mediocrity

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Fulsome indeed is the recording issuing scene; in fact, it is prolific when you consider the "independent" or as some might say the "pirate" issues that are appearing - usually only in London - and which are costing near enough to £4 or more to walk away with..... well might members "complain" that finance is the crux of the matter now! Many will be foregoing this new form of collecting, however, for the truth is that the tapes many have had for years of "air-shots" are of considerably better quality than the versions now being issued on certain labels - not all, of course.

However that may be there can be few who will quibble at snapping up the latest offering on the WINDMILL label! Certainly it can be said that the sleeve of this absurdly cheap album is worth the price of the record. It offers surely one of the most striking Crosby covers ever produced....but, to the details first.

WINDMILL keep turning out the occasional collection of "pirated" material on their somewhat elusive label normally only found on the shelves of Tesco Supermarkets or other seemingly unlikekly retail outlets though I have heard that Boots are liable to stock them. Consequently they are often difficult to obtain unless a small cache of them is discovered, in which case they are worth buying up for there is a ready outlet for the Bing ones among our fellow members. Latest to hand is Windmill WMD 260 BING CROSBY - FAVOURITE MELODIES comprising 10 tracks taken from 40s radio and almost certainly PHILCO RADIO TIME. Apart from "I Wonder Why" which is a very good version of the counter-melody duet from CALL ME MADAM sung here with Judy Garland, and "My Old Kentucky Home" shared with Al Jolson, the remaining tracks are basically solos by Bing with an occasional chorus from the Charioteers. Sound fidelity is about par for pirated radio tracks being at least almost true pitch. The front sleeve has a particularly good colour pic of Bing in his later years - head and shoulders, full-face. He's wearing a grey trilby and matching raincoat; and above his jaunty briar those electric blue eyes glance sideways in questioning surprise. We can afford to ignore the title playing sequence listed on the rear of the sleeve - hopelessly muddled - and the delightful error on the front which tells us that Bing sings "The HOUSE Told Me"! In actual fact, the LP label lists and spells the titles correctly as follows:

I Got the Sun in the Morning.
Moonlight Bay.
My Cynthia's in Love.
The Horse Told Me.
My Old Kentucky Home.
Am I In Love?
After You've Gone.
At Last.
Be My Life's Companion.
I Wonder Why.

There's long been a demand for the reissue of the WHITE CHRISTMAS Irving Berlin film score originally released in the UK on Brunswick LAT 8044 and US Decca DL 8083. Well, here it is at last! But, wait a moment - this latest release is a Japanese MCA import and will set you back £5.50 plus 30p postage from SOUNDTRACK & GENERAL, 406 Brockley Rd. London, S.E.4. for U.K. members. There are probably other import sources but for that kind of money one might expect personal delivery from Emperor Hirohito himself! But let's not be facetious for this is a much sought-after record; so down to details:-

WHITE CHRISTMAS MCA 7151 (MAP S 3768) Japan, Mono. The usual MCA "rainbow" label, but the sleeve has notable differences from the original. For those who've never seen that either this latest had best be described. The background picture of a horse-drawn sled is in pink and dark brown with the two-horse team's hooves reaching to the base of the sleeve; and against this there are four inset circular photographs, one each of Bing, Peggy Lee, Danny Kaye and Irving Berlin. The rest of the frontispiece is scrappily covered with titles and credits relating to the film and the artistes involved on the LP. Owners of original copies will have noted the major differences so far. As for the rear sleeve the film-stills montage and "letter from Irving Berlin" have been abandoned entirely and replaced by three perpendicular columns of sleeve notes printed in Japanese - sorry, no translation - it may be Berlin's letter! The columns occupy three-quarters of the rear sleeve, the remaining quarter noting contents and credits, etc. in Japanese and English this time. On further interesting facet is the inclusion of a lyrics song-sheet in English. This is not an actual film soundtrack LP, for neither Rosemary Clooney nor Vera Ellan were contractually placed to feature on such an LP. Their vocalising is replaced by the voices of Peggy Lee and Trudy Stevens. Joseph Lilley his Orchestra and Chorus provide the further accompaniment.

* 1. The Old Man.
Gee, I Wish I was back in the Army.
2. Sisters.
3. The Best Things Happen While you're Dancing
* 4. Snow.
* 5. Blue Skies.
I'd Rather See a Minstrel Show.
Many.

1. Choreography.
* 2. Count your blessings instead of Sheep
3. Love, You Didn't Do Right by Me.
* 4. What Can you do with a General?
* 5. White Christmas.

The * marked tracks feature Bing on this 1954-recorded album. For full accompaniment

refer to THE A TO Z OF BING CROSBY or other detailed sources of information.

This really is an "around the world with Bing Crosby" Christmas for LPs for two more EEC countries have contributions to make. Firstly, Italian Joker SM 3241 HOLLYWOOD'S FILM MUSIC featuring "All You Want to Do is Dance" on Side 2, track 6. Only this one Bing track. Secondly, German MCA -Coral 7443-D/1-2 (6.28315 (DP)) 2-LP set BRING BACK THE GOOD TIMES - The Dorsey Brothers Orchestra 1934-35. The Bing content doubles up here with Record No. 2 (Side 4) featuring "Two for Tonight" and "I Wished on the Moon) on tracks 6 and 7. Both these albums would appear to be reissues, oftimes to the despair of label collectors - unless, of course, you happen to be a Middle-East oil sheik. Also into that category comes the fourteen-LP set on Bix Beiderbecke, details of which are hoped to be at hand for the next issue.

> Correspondence indicates that the WORLD RECORD set of 6 1 1 albums THE VERY BEST OF BING in its elegantly-sleeved and packaged form has delighted most readers - and many but not all will have found that a 7-inch flexible disc was available to advertise the collection - details of which were dealt with in these columns in the past two issues of BING. Lyntone Records produced this small disc and it is the usual type "demonstration" effort and comes with a colour brochure and a letter and reply envelope. What makes it especially important to the collector is the message spoken by Bing which draws it to a conclusion, along with his signature tune. The main introduction is narrated by Alan Dell; it is numbered LYN 3081 and has THE VERY BEST OF BING as its title. Surely one for the collection? I believe some collectors do, in fact, have spares - or perhaps a letter to WORLD RECORDS, mentioning the ICC might prove fruitful.

From the US comes a film soundtrack LP Encore S1-101 MERMAN IN THE MOVIES 1930-38; a fairly self-explanatory record which features Bing duetting "You're the Top" and "Moon Over Shanghai" from their film ANYTHING GOES (TOPS IS THE LIMIT). An 8½" x 11" double-sided sleeve insert printed with an introduction to Ethel Merman and notes on the tracks comes with the LP - which is fairly novel.

No details other than title and catalogue information come with the news of a US release of a 2-LP album, as follows: Columbia MUSICAL TREASURY P2S 5466 (DS 663 - Bing; DS 664 non-Bing). It is hoped to publish full information on this and other albums in the New Year.

> The two most important recordings that will be available for Christmas are not, unfortunately, to hand at the time of compilation of these columns: they will, therefore, be fully reviewed in the next issue of BING. But, by the time this is being read many members will be in possession of the LPs we're talking about and it goes without saying that a proper review is essential bearing in mind that both are 1975-recorded albyms. For the time being here are the titles and cat. nos, etc. of the collections as they appear on LP, cassette and cartridge:

A COUPLE OF SONG AND DANCE MEN: FRED ASTAIRE/BING CROSBY UNITED ARTISTS UAS 29888 (LP)
LP Price: £2.99. PETE MOORE & AND HIS ORCHESTRA. TCK 29888 (Cass)
8Xu 29888 (Ctg)

Titles: Roxie; Top Billing; Sing; Its Easy to Remember (Fred Solo); In the Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening; Pick Yourself Up; How Lucky Can you Get; I've Got a Shooting Box in Scotland; Change Partners (Bing solo); Mr. Keyboard Man; The Entertainer; Spring, Spring Spring; A Couple of Song and Dance Men: Top Bill reprise -finale.

You will not need telling this is another Ken Barnes production. And secondly.....

A SOUTHERN MEMOIR: Bing Crosby Decca London SHU 8499, LP £2.99; KSACU 8489 Cassette £3.25
Paul Smith: Musical Conductor.

On the Alamo; Alabamy Bound; Where the Morning Glories Grow; Stars Fell on Alabama; Carolina in the Morning; Swanee; Way Down Yonder in New Orleans; Georgia on my Mind; Cryin' for the Carolines; She is the Sunshine of Virginia; Sleepy-Time Down South; Sailing Down the Chesapeake Bay.

This SOUTHERN album consists of songs that Bing recorded in January this year and is - as we've mentioned elsewhere - a package produced by Bing Crosby Enterprises. It was thought that United Artists might take up the marketing of this album but in the event an arrangement was made with The Decca Record Co.

Sorry about lack of further details but we can wait no longer if you are to have this a reasonable time away from the last-minute Christmas postal rush - if there is one this year! Still, many of the Fred/Bing album have been heard via the radio - enough indeed to indicate that it just has to be obtained: quickly!

Finally, a personal note (Bert Bishop of course!): I require, on any label, a copy of HIGH TOR. For trade I have ALL STAR FESTIVAL UNM-1, CHRISTMAS STAR B/J 202, THE YOUNG BING CROSBY CDS 1084, CROSBY CLASSICS SHM 520 and the following Corals: 79; 80; 81; 91.

Editor: 'Tis a pity we couldn't wait for the two albums Bert mentions...a little thing to look for on the duet album is that on the front Bing sits to the left of Fred, while on the reverse Bing sits to the RIGHT of his fellow-artist; this was a sincere and purely selfless arrangement because both wanted the other to be FIRST featured! They reached this lovely compromise....so we heard at Leeds. Both take the album like the "once in a century" entertainers Bing and Fred are. Because an American issue cannot be made in time several thousand of the Crosby/Astaire album are being specially flown to the States! in time for Christmas.....
Much has been said this year - and justifiably so - about Bing's fine singing but I am tempted to say that until you've heard his rendering of Fred's class CHANGE PARTNERS - you ain't heard nuthin' yet!

With regard to the WINDMILL album that Bert also mentioned (the price by the way is 79p or if you're really lucky 59p!) the sleeve certainly is certainly one of the most eye-catching I've ever seen, with the BING CROSBY in gorgeous, bold "shadow" type. But these records leave me slightly uneasy - as I explained about the Avenue International effort which included Bing's first solo, sustaining broadcast. The quality, while listenable, is not good - the tape seems to "skid" at times producing a heightening of the tone (only momentarily, of course) in places. The casual buyer could be turned off buying a Bing album IF he judges them all by the sound of these "pirated" efforts. And who actually produces them, one wonders? As Bert has pointed out, those two other popular performers, Judy Garland and Al Jolson, appear on this album but the sleeve carries not a whisper of their presence. One would have expected otherwise.

And, incidentally, this is the album that made a brief appearance some months ago - and was immediately withdrawn - on the same day of issues in fact! Apparently there were errors on the sleeve, or something was wrong. Anyway, its here now....and as a matter of interest, a Boots in South Wales had a stack of at least 50 of these. A lovely sight they made, too, in concert with THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT, THIS IS BING CROSBY, BING GOES LATIN, THE SPECIAL MAGIC OF BING and all the other albums that are now adorning the record shops. Just like old times....in fact, I love to shop like I USED to shop....

One last thought on KEEPING TRACK; I shall always be baffled, even while acknowledging the almost universal appeal of the Crosby voice, that they issue his records in Japan...and China, come to that. I mean, their style of singing, without being offensive, is a squeaky, montonous, tinkling sound.....how come they appreciate the Bing sound? Ah, you will rush to inform me - THAT'S BING! And, I'm inclined to agree!

The BBC, also as remarked elsewhere, did their bit with the Bing/Fred - it is to be hoped that members keep the pot boiling with plenty of requests to their favourite radio programmes. One of the popular papers - Sun or Mirror - had a feature on Christmas "pops" in a two-page spread and amongst all the modern stuff was WHITE CHRISTMAS - by Bing, of course. It said this was THE record and added the interesting thought that it never quite made the charts (sic) because nearly every family already had its copy! Probably true, too. It also said it had sold 135,000,000 which I feel IS a slight mistake!

CELLULOID CHRISTMAS CROSBY.

BY: KEITH PARKINSON.

Crime fiction is rather remote from Crosbyana - and for that matter, not very seasonal! Having said that let me try to justify the heading of the story for this issue. The longest-running publication which appears regularly and is entirely devoted to crime is ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE. The May, 1963, edition provided a story by Baynard Kendrick under the title A CLUE FROM BING CROSBY. It concerns a blind detective, Duncan MacLain, being invited to solve a kidnapping case. The circumstances involve private recordings being used as substitutes for the traditional ransom notes. One such tape-recording contains the opening bars of Bing's SILENT NIGHT as background to the kidnapper's demands. Quick as a flash the blind detective proves he's read his ROAD TO BING CROSBY discography!

> "The musical interlude is the first song on side one of Bing Crosby's Decca recording DL8128, entitled MERRY CHRISMAS - sales to date about two million," he states, obviously having read the Braille edition of the Guinness Book of Records as well. "Number one on the hit parade is Bing's rendition of Christmas cheer, " he continues. The rest is easy. A local Crosby fanatic happens to own a restaurant with an unlicensed public address system. We take up the story again where...

"The first few chimes introducing SILENT NIGHT had scarcely pealed forth from the loud-speaker over the Maple Leaf's front door when the detective walked into the bar". The restaurant owner happens to be "a Scot grown fat with good living through the years - which perhaps rules out anyone we know! - who has a perfectly good excuse for dispensing the Christmas spirit in such an odd way. He's a Bing fan.

> "I've been playing it every night now, except Sundays, for the past ten nights," he tells the detective, not realising that his actions are perfectly rational to you and I, reading this magazine. The outcome of the story results in a nearby inhabitant being arrested to the accompaniment of Bing's voice singing I'LL BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS.

I have a spare copy of the edition of the ELLERY QUEEN MYSTERY MAGAZINE in which this story is printed - if anycne is interested.

In the War years grown men were moved to tears by Bing's rendition of WHITE CHRISTMAS. US troops demanded that Bing should sing the Irving Berlin number but both Bing and the troops knew the result would be overwhelming nostalgia for hom. There is a story that the American authorities once seriously considered BANNING the voice of Bing reaching the troops in particularly remote, or dangerous, fronts in the belief that it would seriously lower morale. Then it was reconsidered and the belief obtained credence that it had the reverse effect.

Bette Davis in her autobiography THE LONELY LIFE chronicles the work of the Hollywood Canteen Foundation which primarily raised funds for servicemen. Bing's effect on tough, mature, audiences during the Wartime festive season is illustrated as follows:

> "Christmas Eve was always a difficult night. Patriotism or no, this is family night and we always worked on skeleton crew with a paucity of entertainment. I will never forget Bing Crosby and his four boys coming back-stage one Christmas Eve and singing carols to the boys for hours. There wasn't a dry eye in the place."

WHITE CHRISTMAS had the distinction of being an Academy Award winning song in 1942 - and the title of a film 12 years later. Paramount Pictures brought Irving Berlin to Hollywood to score the film HOLIDAY INN for Bing and Fred Astaire. The main song to be featured in the film was to have been HAPPY HOLIDAY but Berlin struggled to compose a song suitable for the Christmas sequence in the film. There were two musical directors assigned to the

film, Robert Emmett Dolan and Walter Scharf, and it was in the office of the latter that Berlin worked in order to complete the score in time for the film's deadline. When he heard WHITE CHRISTMAS as finally orchestrated he was well pleased. Bing commented later: "I think if he had heard a comedy parody of WHITE CHRISTMAS about that time he'd have just gone up the wall. He just laid down the law, but he was very enthusiastic - and somehow that enthusiasm would be transferred to everyone else. He'd make you share it. I'm the lucky one to have had WHITE CHRISTMAS."

The aforementioned Robert Emmett Dolan was the producer of the film WHITE CHRISTMAS and he relates a story about the pre-production of the film. Melvin Frank and Norman Panama agreed to rewrite the films script at a rather late stage in the proceedings. As soon as pages were written they were sent along to director Michael Curtiz who was seeing people for casting. Rosemary Clooney was seen by Dolan when she was lunching at Paramount. She was obviously upset and explained the reason for her distress as follows:

> "I was just up with Mr. Curtiz and he started to tell me the story of the picture - it was so marvellous - and when he got to a certain point he was so involved with the story he actually began to cry a little, and he stopped and said: 'Excuse me, my dear, I simply cannot go on.'"

Dolan did not explain to Rosie that Curtiz could not go on because the scriptwriters hadn't sent the director the rest of the script. Certainly the finished product had the usual Hollywood gloss that belied any sign of haste being employed.

Not that such tactics are typical of Hollywood. In 1933, S.J. Perelman and Dorothy Parker both collaborated on a screen treatment of THE BIG BROADCAST OF 1936, Bing's contribution to which was discussed in a previous issue of BING magazine. Neither writer was credited when the finished product was eventually premiered a couple of years later. Neither Perelman nor Parker would, presumably, object to this omission because as respected writers the film scarcely did them justice from a literary point of view.

If there is nothing interesting on the box and the Christmas pud. is lying heavy, leave the kids to fight it out alone and keep awake with a Crosby Quiz. No prizes, the answers are at the end of the article - but if you get more than half right you'll probably survive a breathalyser test as well:

1. Which Bing film did best at the box office?
2. Who wrote: "I am reminded of Bing's pet grouse; that perhaps a little too much is being made about this money business, which is typified in one of my own cracks: 'Yes, I think Bing looks good in technicolour. Only that way can the public see the blue of the day meet the gold of his pot'"?
3. To which Bing film does the following review refer? "The pace is faster than the current fashion, the gags are often unashamedly corny and while the proceedings never aspire to more than a neat cinematic competence they are agile and transport us, without awkwardness, from an opening song and dance routine that is strictly from vaudeville, thro' the sprightly modern manoeuvres of the credit titles, into a burlesque documentary exposition with newsreel photography and a portentous narrator to set a scene that is about to be converted into the realm of unrealism to which previous such films have always led. The easy-going confidence of it all is admirable. No high-pressure anxiety beneath the surface, although the task of matching the old fashioned spirit can't have been as easy as they make it look."
4. What have the films SHE LOVES ME NOT and DIXIE in common?
5. His first film contract was with Paramount in the 30s. He was later to marry the adopted daughter of Paramount producer Cecil B. deMille altho' acting ability brought him to the attention of the studio. He was in two films which featured Bing - ROAD TO SINGAPORE and STAR-SPANGLED RHYTHM - altho' one of his first small parts was in WAIKIKI WEDDING. Early in his career he earned 2 dollars a night hiring himself out at parties where he did imitations of Bing, Louis Armstrong and Maurice Chevalier. He used to hang a sheet upon a door-jamb, shine a light behind him and, in silhouette, mime to the records with which he travelled. Who is he?
6. When Bing first signed for Paramount how many films did he contract to make?

(Cont. p.50.

A QUIZ FOR CHRISTMAS:

Not too difficult - but of course, you must not scurry off to the record cabinet to get the answers!

1. ACE OF HEARTS was a prolific Bing label: can you name eight albums - there were at least 12?

2. "Young Crosby, in particular, shows promise." Do you know the album sleeve on which this appears as an intro?

3. Who composed and directed the music for Bing's "MAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY?"

4. Can you name at least three labels on which Bing has appeared in the last 10 years - original recordings, not reissues?

5. A CHRISTMAS SING WITH BING (AROUND THE WORLD): This album was made from a broadcast made in - ?

6. Who was the very famous song-writer, composer whose songs, curiously, Bing said on his Autobiography Set, he had somehow missed out on? And why wasn't this completely true?

7. "CHRISTMAS IN KILLARNEY" appears on (a) album WHEN IRISH EYES ARE SMILING, or (b) SHILLELAGHS & SHAMROCKS?

8. On 22 February, 1956 Bing recorded "TRUE LOVE" with Grace Kelly; the next day he recorded with another lady "YOU'RE THE TOP" Who was this lady?

9. On one of his recordings of PENNIES FROM HEAVEN, Bing was accompanied by a famous orchestra; and three choruses were taken in turn - the third by Bing. Which two artists sang choruses one and two?

10. "MELE KALIKIMAKA" is Hawaiian for - ?

11. In 1943, because of a musicians' strike, Bing made four records with chorus accompaniment only. Can you name one of them - or more, of course?

12. Bing recorded LET'S START THE NEW YEAR RIGHT in what year and with which orchestra?

13. Has Bing ever duetted with his brother Bob, who can, of course, be heard as vocalist on many band records?

14. Bing duetted with his eldest son Gary on several records, including a million-seller. Did he ever record with any of his other sons?

(Answers later on in this issue.)

LET'S DREAM A WHILE.....

HOLIDAY OF A LIFETIME by May Hamer. (Bury).

I was speechless with excitement when I heard I had won THE competition! The prize was 10 days in the States, with no expense spared, as the guest of Bing and Kathryn Crosby. All my life I have been a great fan of Bing's so you can perhaps imagine how I felt. Everything was a completely new experience for me - it was, indeed, the first time I had been out of this country and my first flight in a big jet. Or any other plane for that matter. A chauffeur-driven Rolls took me to the Crosby residence - and I shall never forget that first meeting when they welcomed me to their home and family. It was truly wonderful. I was taken to the headquarters of the American fan club and met many people...everyone was utterly charming and friendly and I was very, very, happy. I found out that people in America caught a plane much as we catch a bus (sometimes!) and I was whisked everywhere, including the famous Disneyland. The time passed much too quickly and soon my cases were re-packed and I was waiting for the car to take me away to the airport for home. We listened for the car driving up; when it did, instead of tooting the horn, it rang a bell..it rang and rang...until I woke up. Wretched alarm clock!

Editor: Hmmmm..much nicer than the nightmare I had the other night!

The judge towered above me in his red-robes and wig; I felt myself wishing I could sink thro' the dock-floor as he glared through horn-rimmed spectacles at me....I glanced at the jury, but their faces were almost as as hard as the judge's. Deliberately he shuffled some papers, cleared his throat and fixed his unwavering steely gaze even more directly on me....

"You have been found guilty by the jury and may I say I emphatically agree with their verdict. You cannot go on declaring that Bing Crosby is the only popular singer worth listening to....you must learn to tolerate other peoples' opinions, no matter how odd, or even ridiculous they may seem to YOUR ways of thinking. They are entitled to those opinions...and you must learn to accept, if not respect, them....to bring this home to you I cannot, for the sake of society, be lenient....I sentence you to listen to F.... S..... singing WHITE CHRISTMAS 100 times in a row..." My hands gripped the dock rail...I thought I was going to faint...but of course, I woke up, SWEATING.

RAKES PROGRESS:

by JOHN MARSHALL
(Teddington).

EXTRACT FROM "THE DAILY EXPRESS" March 22, 1937:

"TODAY'S PROBLEM CHILD" by Paul Holt.

Today's problem child is 33-year-old Harry L. Crosby, known to the world as Bing. He got the nickname when as a small and rowdy child his habit was to pursue old ladies through the streets of Spokane, Washington, shouting "Bing!" as he waved a toy pistol in their faces.

Bing's problem is that really he's a tough guy, but nobody will believe it. By nature he's hard as a nut, lacking all pretensions to an esoteric culture.

He plays golf and backs horses, and might have been a highpowered insurance agent. He's a man's man.

But because nature blessed him with a freak larynx (there is a muscle loose) a million spinsters think he's sweet, and that's what makes him mad. It earns him £66,000 a year, and it still makes him mad.

You can see how mad it makes him in PENNIES FROM HEAVEN, his latest film, which is remarkable for two things. Bing put up half the money for it himself, and he spends an hour out of the 90 minutes pretending that he isn't a crooner and less than 20 minutes proving he is.

The Crosby aids to he-manhood revealed in the flicer include - striking a match on the thumb, being kind to small girls, and grand-dads, being rude to the girl you love, smoking a curved pipe, being a stowaway, tramp, and fugitive from justice, singing in the rain.

To my mind the best thing about the film is the music score. And here's a strange thing. Somebody's been using some common sense in the film business. Already the title number from the film, PENNIES FROM HEAVEN, has been on the air 51 times and the sheet music sales are topping the 50,000 mark.

It all happened so quickly - there simply had to be a suggestion of divine intervention. No sooner had I fallen back into my rocking-chair, having inscribed "CHARLES THOMPSON GO HOME" on an adjacent wall, than I stumbled on the above in a newly-acquired copy of the Daily Express, 1937. Golly, I thought to myself, this IS topical and of an appropriately inflamatory nature with its straight from the shoulder expose of the great hulking brute whose vocal efforts have kept me in thrall for the past 40 years. The man's socks positively bulge with clay and its a veritable trove of tidbits that any Sinatra fan would g_ve his eye teeth for. Furthermore, whereas it takes Charlie (Thompson) 244 pages to present his portrait of this great American Jekyll & Hyde, this wolf in sheep's clothing wraps him up in a few paragraphs, without even raising the mildest of sweats.

This long-ago writer, Paul Holt, whose background is unknown to me but who radiates all the enthusiasm for Bing of a confirmed Al Bowlly fan, begins by making it clear that even as a mere tot in knickerbockers, the infantile H.L.Crosby was not above terrorising the streets of downtown Spokane, goosing elderly ladies en route to church and in general, scaring the bejasus out of honest God-fearing citizens. The rot had already set in.....

Are we, today, capable of appreciating how close the course of our Circle's history came to being radically altered by this embryo skinhead (nothing personal there!) and it is at once interesting and stupefying to speculate on what might have happened had he been just a teensy bit more imaginative in the sound effects department. "BING!" indeed. Ask yourself how many of us would be carefully guarding our hoards of "SPLAT" Crosby recordings; or sitting around anticipating the next waxing by the popular crooner "VOOM" Crosby! Would you, today, have ripped open your buff envelope containing your eagerly awaited copy of the Bumper Christmas issue of "ZAP"? I have only to recall my own youthful simulations of the late, great, Buck Jones, to realise that my allegiance to any

"Phut" Crosby would be a tenuous thing.

This writer, Paul Holt, goes on to point out in a most succinct style that we should be in no way fooled by those blue eyes and that under the cardigan beats there a heart of solid titanium. Additionally, so as to avoid any juxtaposition with that dreaded word "culture", we can safely assume that Bing is only this side of total illiteracy - just enough in fact, as the following paragraph takes pains to mention, to grope his way thro' the daily racing sheets. He plays golf, backs the gees and presumably smokes and spits , swears, kicks pussies just like one of the boy's. John Bignell may sue me, but where I came from, pre-War, it was not helping this assessment to point out that Bing would have made a whiz stab at high-powered insurance selling.

How very thoughtful of nature, which had so lightly blessed him with her bounties, to have provided him with a "loose muscle"...I cannot personally vouch for my own feelings were I to be surrounded by millions of baying spinsters, but as it omits the other few millions of socially adjusted ladies who had taken vows, also females under the age of consent, Bing might conceivably have felt scared out of his Daks; but being that enigma of a thousand variations he chose to get mad! That's the first healthy sign of the narrative.

Written perhaps at a time when participation in one's own vehicle financing was considered unsportsmanlike, Bing's 50 per cent interest in PENNIES FROM HEAVEN takes on a sinister note! But as I remember that opus as one of my favourite Crosby movies and I am certain it did well as the box-office around my neck of the woods (Wagga-Wagga? Ed) I can suppose that Bing, in modern parlance, laughed all the way to the bank.

Having read this squib on the way to work on morning all those years ago, in March 1937, the casual observer would have been hard put to imagine that close on 40 years on someone would be re-reading it, comparing its other-side-of-the-coin image with much that comes out of the Chas. Thompson book and still waiting for the Astaire duo album any day. It would have been an ultra-long view.

Editor: A rose by any other name.....yet 'tis said that if Hitler had remained Shickelgruber he could never have got where he did, wherever that is now! But I can clearly remembers aeons ago when we first heard the voice of Mr. C how perfectly the name seemed to suit the sound! The Bing complements the Crosby so perfectly - there is a crisp, completeness about it. As John Marshall ruminates, it COULD have been different. Apart from those that John mentions would it have been the same if it had been "Slim" Crosby; or "Fats" Crosby.....what is, we may well ask, in a name?

paper
The piece from the 1937/is the kind of snippet one was always reading about Bing - and still does. Some of it was puerile, some of it good. Just as it is today. I should think these long-ago newspaper pieces are of particular interest to younger readers. Obviously someone was keeping check on the number of times PENNIES FROM HEAVEN was broadcast! It was only a few issues ago we printed the incredible story printed in a popular magazine in 1934 that Bing was going to make no more gramophone records, but concentrate on films. And that year, of course, was the year Bing started his 20-year-long contract with Decca! Stick to BING, however, and you won't be misled!

Bing's story, or pieces about him, crop up all over the place and apart from the general press and show business magazines he is liable to be read about in racing and fishing magazines. But one of the most unusual appearances must have been the quite well-written story that appeared in a magazine called "PREDICTION" - no, not another racing tipsters gazette but a magazine that deals with the occult! In fact, one of the stories in the same issue that Bing's story appeared in was entitled (in all seriousness) "Voices from the Beyond"! People who would not normally notice this book must have been startled to see quite a good picture of Mr. C. on its front cover. The story was titled in a very original way, too: THE RISE..AND RISE OF HARRY LILLIS CROSBY.. The author was un-named but it was an excellent and accurate story, ending with occult overtones suggesting Bing was due for a revival. For those interested the issue was that of October 1975.

BING PICTURES:

Fine for Crosby "dens" or for scrap-books.....

For those who like to collect photographs FRANK MURPHY, 32 Ferndale Avenue, WALLSEND, TYNE & WEAR, NE28 7NE, former Secy. of ICC. has a gallery including the following. They are postcard size and thanks to demand Frank can reduce the price to 15p each with a minimum order of five. Overseas members should remit the sterling equivalent:

1. Bing and Harry, aged 2.
2. Bing/Mary Martin: Birth of the Blues.
3. Bing/Leslie Phythian, Cockermouth, 1966
4. Bing/Little Dublin Singers, 1966
5. Bing, Kathryn & Harry 1961.
6. Bing/Broadway Bill "Riding High".
7. Bing at the CBS Mike 1931.
8. Bing, Dixie, Gary 1933.
9. Bing and Bob Hope "Variety Girl"
10. Bing in Russian Adventure, 1966
11. Bing, Kathryn, Frank Murphy, 1966.
12. Bing & Gary, outdoor Benefit, 1950s.
13. Bing solo at mike, same Benefit.
14. Bing/Kathryn at Wine store late 50s.
15. Bing/Kathryn, shark-fishing trophies.
16. Bing, /Sinatra/Martin - Robin & 7 Hoods.
17. Doctor Rhythm 1938
18. Bing/Joan Collins, Hope, Britain '61.
19. Bing/Louis Campbell: The Star Maker.
20. Bing/Kathryn in evening dress 1957
21. Bing/Martha Raye "Double or Nothing".
22. Bing in "Say One for Me".
23. Bing/Bob in "Teamwork"
24. Bing/4 sons on Ichabod set.
25. Bing/Dixie, early 30s.
26. Honest Harry Crosby, St. Leger, 1965
27. Bing at Calgary Parade, late 50s.
28. Bing holding Dolly Varden trout.
29. Bing, Kathryn, Harry, Frances 1965
30. Bing/Betty Hutton "Here come the Waves"
31. Bing, Kathryn, Harry, Las Cruces, 60s.
32. Bing golfing at St. Andrews 1952
33. Bing/Barry FitzGerald "Welcome Stranger"
34. Bing, Dixie four sons, 1952
35. Bing, R. Clooney, L. Armstrong, Hi-Los.
36. Bing, Frances Langford, early 40s.
37. Bing/Bill Morrow, radio producer.
38. Bing/Eddie Lang 1932.
39. Bing and son Lindsay fishing, early 50s
40. Bing, Bill Bendix, Sir Cedric Hardwicke, "A Connecticut Yankee".
41. Bing singing "Little One" High Society.
42. Bing in "The Emperor Waltz".
43. Bing/Donald O'Connor, Fred McMurray. Sing you Sinners.
44. Bing and the Clan (sic) Robin 7 Hoods.
45. Bing & Mike Holliday Pose 1.
46. " " " Pose 2.
47. " " " Pose 3.
48. Bing /Margie Holliday.
49. Bing with Dermot O'Brien, Milo O'Shea.
50. Bing/Leslie Gaylor, Shepperton.
51. Bing/Frank & Alma Murphy, John Maugham, Derek Parkes &c. of ICC 1961.
52. Bing/Perry Como Pose 1.
53. " " " " 2.
54. " " " " 3.
55. " /Ken Barnes "Bon Vivant" 1975
56. Bing/Pete Moore 1975
57. Bing/Frank Murphy (arm around shoulder)
58. Bing/London recording studio manager.
59. Reg, Bob, Les, Bing, David Bell 1975
60. Bing/Frank Murphy shaking hands 1975
61 Bing singing at Mike 1975
62. Bing/Vera Lynn Pose 1 1975
63. " " " " 2 "
64 " " " " 3 "
65 Bing/Fred Astaire pose 1, 1975
66. " " " " 2, "
67. " " " " 3. "

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USA 3 per dollar; 15 x 12 3 dollars each, minimum of 3.

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   ITV TV Oct. 1975 Stars on Sunday (Bing excerpt only.
   BBC Radio 4 Sept. 75 BING IN WOGANS WORLD

2. BBC Radio 2 August Bank Hol. 1975, Bing and Brian Willey.
   BBC Radio 2 Pete Murray's Open House, Sept. 75 with Chas. Thompson guest.
   BBC Radio 2 August 1975 Bing on the Terry Wogan Show.

USA &c. 4 dollars.

The above is an advertisement; readers are reminded they can advertise free in a modest way - say three or four lines. Anything more by arrangement, write Editor for details.

READERS MAY LIKE TO KNOW THAT AN AMERICAN ISSUE OF "THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT" IS BEING NEGOTIATED: MAY, INDEED, HAVE ALREADY BEEN MADE.

The American market is now completely "sold" on hard, bizarre, rock, according to Ken Barnes, at Leeds. And judging by the success of some of our "stars" (pardon the term) he is almost certainly right. Its a sombre thought.....

BING ON THE BOX

T.V., RADIO
FILMS
REVIEWED BY: BERT BISHOP.

Whilst these columns are mainly concerned with past events we can, at least for once, take an anticipatory peek at a Christmas present for the 1965 BING CROSBY CHRISTMAS SPECIAL already mentioned will be televised here on Christmas Eve by Thames Television. This is the show that, in addition to the Crosby family, stars Fred Astaire and The Young Americans. So have all the family gathered round the "magic window", have the mince pies handy, not to mention the cup that cheers for this special Yuletide treat. What a wonderful way to herald in Christmas - and round off this unique year?

Now let's have a look at what has transpired over the airwaves since the last issue. Radio 4 calls our attention first when at 6.15pm on Sept. 7 the BBC presented a special edition of WOGAN'S WORLD, hosted by Terry Wogan and, instead of the usual 3 guests, only one - Bing Crosby. A further departure from the norm was also affected by Terry Wogan setting aside his Birmingham studio and attendant audience and conducting his programme from "the sunny lounge of a house somewhere in London". He began the musically interpolated interview of 45 minutes by putting it to Bing that, according to Johnny Mercer, Bing had invented the vocal solo. Bing didn't go along with that as may be imagined, giving that credit to Jolson. He elaborated further on 'Jolie' and the early years.... Jolson the 'aggressive' performer; Bing the 'understated' one, as Wogan observed.

Bing touched on his Conzaga days which prompted Wogan to ask if he intended sending young Harry there - but Bing thought not and expanded on the line that Harry's musical education would follow now that he wished to take a more serious approach. The old 32-bar song construction was compared by Bing with the modern intricate construction which he said he found a little hard to get into; but Wogan opined that Bing never knocks modern music or singers. Rightly, I feel, for Bing was modern at one time and even now, among the chaff there is a lot of good grain.

They went on to Bing's recent (at that time) recording session with Fred Astaire and the "double songs" that are featured on the album. Bing had plenty of plaudits for Fred, thinking him a good singer with excellent style and timing but, conversely, felt his own dancing started and ended at nothing more than a time-step! Bing described his experience on TOP OF THE POPS: "They have about eight or ten different acts on pedestals all around, and these kids in the middle. As they cut from one performer to another the kids just sachee over and stand in front of the bandstand. It seems to me they are looking at the camera more than they are looking at the entertainer, or looking at one another, punching one another and'wrastling' around....not a very good audience, really.'

Wogan: "You had a long gap before TIE A YELLOW RIBBON in '73..."

BING:"The last one was TRUE LOVE...was it really 18 years between those two? I just never paid much attention to the prospects of making records because the last few I made didn't seem to do well - the boat had sailed you know...get off before you're pushed off. So, I just didn't do much. I did an album with Basie....Rosie Clooney, but not much happened. I was just kinda discouraged until Ken Barnes came over with an album he'd made with Johnny Mercer with the Pete Moore arrangements and they sounded good. I thought I'd love to go to London - its my favourite city in the world - so why not go over there and make a couple of albums?"

They reverted to TRUE LOVE and Grace Kelly's contribution to the song. She was to have mimed to an un-named artiste but Bing put a word in and Miss Kelly ended up with a Gold Record. "A conversation piece that she could dine out on for weeks down in Monte Carlo," as Bing remarked, especially as it was her only record. The concluding and relevant bars of the duet were then played.

Talk of HIGH SOCIETY turned to Frank Sinatra...."(he) gets a bad press in places. He's a Sicilian; he has a quick fuse; he's what I would call an implacable enemy and a loyal friend. If he's your friend he's your friend for life - and it works the other way round. You touch him off wrong he'll never forgive you." Bing felt he was a little old for the famous "rat-pack", though he knew them all and played golf with some of them. It varied in numbers and personnel..."looks like they quarrelled a lot," thought Bing. Then he spoke of the reasons why he left Los Angeles for San Francisco - jet-commuting distance to Hollywood - friends there - shooting and fishing clubs - and golf and a nice climate - and many more attractive features.

Bing was somewhat husky throughout this interview but chatted quite freely on most topics that Terry Wogan raised, including what might be termed small talk about the family - though Bing is very much the family man. He related an amusing anecdote concerning his son, Nathaniel, who is already a dedicated golfer. They were playing at Gleneagles and right thro' the long twilights Nathaniel would be out practising. One night, about 11.30pm, they found him out under the moon on one of the greens. The club 'pro' found out about it and sent the boy a formal note to the effect that he report at the club and pay a fine of £100 for playing after 11 o'c at night. "Nathaniel was scared to death; he thought it was on the level!"

Wogan: It would be a nice feather in your cap if Nathaniel was to win the BING CROSBY OPEN!

BING. Wouldn't that be something! He wants to play next year...he'll be 14 then and he's good enough to play in it, but we play with a professional partner and that's a lot of money involved for the professional and I'd hate to have him go down there and play miserably. So, I don't think a professional would be enchanted with the idea of playing with Nathaniel Crosby just for the glory unless he got some loot along with it." Bing went on to note that he had played 21 courses during their British sojourn - and "did very little work". Nonetheless, Bing's sure kept the pages of this magazine full with his professional activities!

Wogan: When in your career was the time you stood back and said: I've made it now?

Bing: I've said that several times, Terry, but I've always found something else. I'd find a new goal - actually, I could never retire because there's such a great deal of enjoyment and pleasure for me to be drived from getting back with musicians....and singing a good arrangement of a good song, or doing a show with competent, talented, people.

Wogan: Doesn't working with you intimidate other singers?

Bing: No, I don't think so. It shouldn't! My singing's just a natural delivery.

For another musical break we had LEARN TO CROON from the AUTOBIOGRAPHY set, which amply illustrated Bing's delivery - and style!

From Whiteman's imposition of the rubber-stringed violin anecdote (a Bing special!) attention turned to Bob Hope and ROAD TO HONG KONG days in England and how Bing persuaded Bob to go to Ascot where "Rapid Robert", who never went racing, promptly lost £50 on a horse called Midge - a hot tip from the studio - when the nag failed to start and jumped the the fence to the in-field instead. "They chased it for half-an-hour...it must have run 8 miles," recalled an amused Bing. He spoke more of Hope and their initial meeting at the Friars Club: how they became friendly and took out a couple of girls from the show HONEYMOON LANE. Bob was to marry one of them - Dolores Hope, of course. The radio feud, good for jokes and gags, led to the "ROAD" movies. "He had the nose and you had the ears!" remarked Terry Wogan. "Did you ever have to pin your ears back?" An obvious prompt for the appropriate anecdote of how Bing came to make a film where he finally said no to glued-back ears and the film, SHE LOVES ME NOT, was released with some scenes showing him "like a whippet in full flight" and others "like a taxi with its doors open."

Imagine having all Bing's films at home in 16mm and not looking at them in a long time.

Well, that's the situation in the Crosby household!

> From films to television and Bing's approximate year of family situation comedy shows. "It kind of laid an egg; it didn't do very well. I thought they were pretty good little shows - but I got awful tired of it - every day doing the same thing..the same plot situations...it was like being in jail,..we made 36 programmes then I quit; I couldn't take any more."

Wogan noted that Bing's great art was making it seem that Bing wasn't working off a script at all and that he was making it up as he went along - the relaxed way. Bing offered the reason that he tried to play everything conversationally or how it fitted his own personality, changing the script a little to suit his way with words and just using the right lines so that the opposing artiste had the proper cue and wasn't just "standing there with egg on his face." Bing was adamant that the production side was not for him: "That's the real hard work, Terry. It takes a lot of patience and a lot of talent - and I don't think I have that kind of talent. I've tried to direct kids sometimes and I never could seem to get them going...maybe its because I don't have enough tricks of my own...I don't have any tricks, really."

Bing spoke of Kathy's acting and teaching abilities and then of his antecedents; singing the opening line of "Harrigan" which, we learned, was Bing's uncle's signature tune when he worked on the Pacific Coast. Bing told how he had been to Cork in Ireland but had failed to pin down where, exactly, his ancestors on his mother's side had originated. On his father's side and going way, way, back, Bing had traced the family to England whence they had journeyed over in the Mayflower and landed in Massachusetts; and coming up in time to Captain Nathaniel Crosby in the Hong Kong clipper ship run days, and that worthy's elaborate tomb in the famous Eastern city.

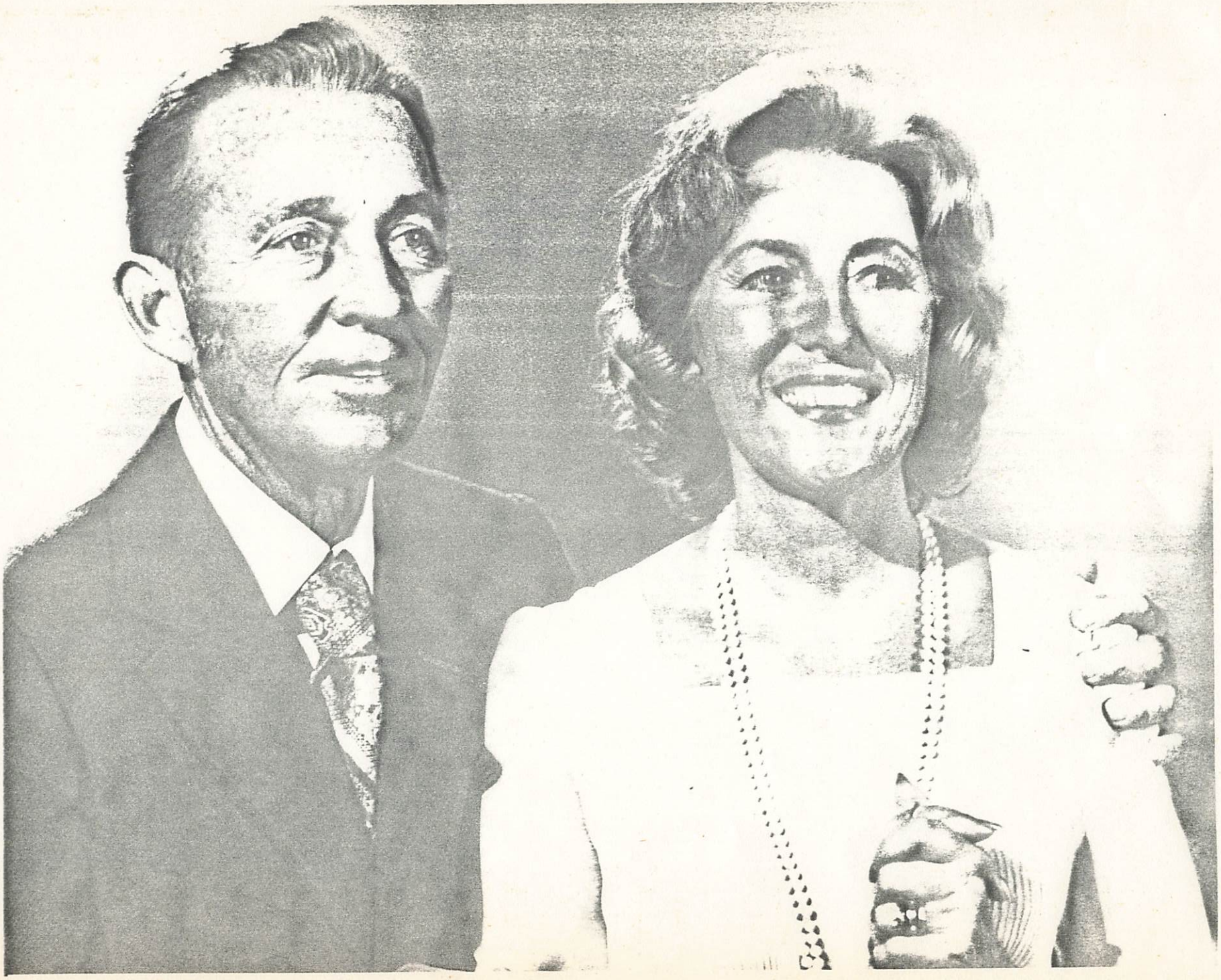
Back to the contemporary family - and Mary Frances who is currently studying at the University of Texas: "She's coming 16 which is very young to be going to university but she got very good marks and wanted to progress. She wants to be an actress. She doesn't aspire to be a ballerina but she keeps in good shape and is taking dancing classes here in London every day. When she gets back to Texas she's going to dance with the ballet there in Austin - that's just a good local company. "I don't want her to pursue the ballet, though - because unless you're a top dancer there's nothing in it but frustration. If she can become a good actress, and I think she can - she seems to have a faculty that you rarely see, Terry, and its hard to put your finger on just what it is...but if she steps in front of a camera something magical seems to happen to her personality, she starts to give off sparks and you realise that there's something there that isn't perceptible on the surface until she starts to work."

> Wogan: If I were Irish I'd say its probably not off the trees that she gets it! You have been able to translate the kind of personality you put into your singing absolutely truly on to film." Bing felt it was his long theatrical experience which had stood him in good stead.

Bing recalled his Wartime experiences in the UK at the Queensbury Club, the Stage Door Canteen and at Bedford with Glenn Miller where they were cutting transcription discs for transmission to the troops. "And I worked there recording two or three days with Glenn and his band. Where are those discs now, one is tempted to ask? From there Bing went to Europe with his little troupe - a guitar player, an accordeonist, two song-and-dance girls and a comedian - getting themselves in a few "hairy" situations in German occupied territory. Bing seemed to think he had worked with "Forces Sweetheart" Vera Lynn on one of the shows and certainly with Anne Shelton and Tommy Handley on a "live" ITMA broadcast. He made his UK debut on TV in 1961 with Peggy Lee and followed up with one with Ron Moody - BING IN LONDON.

Referring to his"youthfulness" - observed - and purity of tone Bing concluded it was due to the fact that he slept well and regularly....early to bed, early to rise...eats well but with an eye on his weight - 150 lbs.(10st.10lbs) "which is what I've weighed for a long, long, time" and where he never used to bother Bing now does vocal exercising whenever a recording date is coming up.

For Dame Vera Lynn this year of 1975 has brought her the ultimate accolade in



two respects; firstly by her inclusion in the Queen's Birthday Honours List and secondly by the fulfillment of her lifelong ambition to sing with Bing. The first was as long overdue as the second. In a congratulatory note to her on being awarded the DBE - sent both personally and on behalf of the ICC - the following was received:

> Dame Vera has asked me to thank you for your very charming letter and your good wishes. We are also very great fans of Bing and had the opportunity to speak to him just a few weeks ago.
>
> Thank you again. Yours sincerely, (Sgd) H. LEWIS.

Harry Lewis is the husband of Dame Vera, of course, and it seems they both personally answered the thousands of greetings.

The new series of THE VERA LYNN SHOW commenced on BBC2 at 7.45pm on September 24 and for the send-off - a la Parkinson - she had Bing as her main guest. The Young Generation led into her appearance by the appropriately rendered song "There is nothing Like a Dame". Having dispensed with the highly-nostlagic "White Cliffs of Dover" - with verse - Vera announced her guest: "It's a very great thrill for me to have with us tonight the first and greatest singer of popular music in the world. Ladies and gentlemen, the incredible BING CROSBY!"

However, it was well into the latter part of the show before the actual introduction and appearance of Bing occurred with these words: "Over the years there have been many singing highlights in my career, but however great the memory of those times nothing can equal the thrill that I now feel in introducing to you someone that we all love and admire so much. Ladies and gentlemen: Bing Crosby!" And Bing strolled on to cheers and applause which certainly equalled, if not excelled, that of the Parkinson reception. He wore a lounge suit and joined the beaming Vera - the Alyn Ainsworth orchestra was playing "Where the Blue of the Night" in almost two-step time which, after Vera's reminder, Bing noted that he remembered "very well". Vera thanked Bing for coming and he responded by saying how much he had been looking forward to it. It was at this juncture that Vera expressed the fulfillment of her life's ambition by singing with Bing - it invited the almost inevitable Crosby rejoinder: "Oooh, Vera! You must elevate your goals a little!" But Vera would have none of it and as the music struck up they went into that presumed first-ever duet, "Sing a Song". The opening lines were backed by piano only and the orchestra and chorus (Young Generation) gradually came in to good effect. Both sang out "good and strong" and gave the likeable Joe Raposo composition the straight and tuneful treatment it deserves. Bing faded a little on a word or two - may be he leaned back out of mike range - but he carried the melody while Vera harmonised, reversing their roles towards the conclusion. It was delightfully executed and with both renowned for their rich, clear tones and perfect diction that much was to be expected. The disappointment came in that they sang only the one duet. A lost opportunity! With all respect to the other guests one felt that after such a musical amlagam the producer might have at least treated us to more than this. It was not to be. Still, we did have another "live" version of "That's What Life is All about" - a pleasant variation from the issued version both in words and music that included a little whistle from Bing. We have quite a collection of these "live" versions now - nearly enough for a complete LP! Bing took a full 40 seconds applause after his solo, and was seeming to just settle in comfortably when it was all over (he had appeared just a bit "wooden" and less buoyant than usual on his entrance). What a pity they couldn't have really made a night of it; but at least posterity has one Bing/Vera duet to relish - something of which I had long given up hope.

(Editor: Several letters have commented on Bing's "less buoyant" appearance in the Vera Lynn Show. It should be remembered that this show was recorded amidst the album recordings, the Parkinson Show, and all the other things Bing undertook, not forgetting the golf. Many members were alarmed, on this showing, that Bing had been pressed into too much and was extremely fatigued. Happily, as we've pointed out elsewhere, his activities since indicate that no harm was done. A point I noticed was that Bing, the eternal Bing, seemed a little embarrassed at the tremendous reception he got after his solo, seemed taken aback and gestured with both arms in the direction of Vera - as if to say: "Come on, this is Vera's show...."

(Cont. over....

BING ON THE BOX cont. by BERT BISHOP:

It was mooted here a couple of years ago that Yorkshire TV should keep tabs on Bing for their pseudo-religious programme STARS ON SUNDAY. Since then there have been some headlines about the gentleman then presenting the programme with the result that it was the most senior North Country personality, Wilfred Pickles, together with his wife Mabel, who have the privilege of announcing: "By a happy coincidence two anniversaries come together tonight. This is STARS ON SUNDAY'S 200TH programme - and the 50th anniversary of Bing Crosby's appearance as a professional entertainer. We are delighted to welcome him to the programme, and for his first appearance he's chosen to sing a new song that means a good deal to him..."That's What Life is all About"."

The scene changed to a comfortable well-appointed lounge, redolent of yesteryear. A log fire burned brightly in a large grate and Bing, relaxing in a deep quilted leather armchair, so naturally leaned over to pitch another log among the flames. This was accompanied by the opening strains of his song being played on a pipe organ. It certainly suited the song well and Bing was in particularly fine voice as he led us thro' the well-known lyric. He made a good visual effect whilst singing by taking a book from a nearby table and opening it as tho' "glancing back through its pages" - and later returning it. All tastefully accomplished even if one was aware that this was good promotion for the LP which had been available for just a fortnight. Wilfred Pickles said afterward the song: "Thank you, Bing Crosby. I particularly like that line, 'But man and boy I looked on high and never never failed to thank Him nightly...' something all of us should take a moment to do each day."

(Ed: Readers may like to know that the lines quoted were actually written by Bing himself for the lyric, vide Ken Barnes at Leeds).

A second appearance by Bing came on October 12 when he read from St. Mark's gospel, Chap.10, verse 1 wherein Jesus speaks to the Pharisees on the importance of stability in marriage and Christian teaching to children. Bing read with great sincerity and his normal richly timbred tones. It was the same armchair tho' the fireplace wasn't too evident. Five weeks later, Nov. 16, Bing appeared on this programme for the third time to give a further reading, this time the Gospel of St. Matthew, Chap. 7, verses 1 to 12. Some good advice that commences with, and broadens the theme: "Judge not, that ye be not judged" tho' Bing read from the New Bible Translation, as on the previous occasion. It has been said that Bing will sing "Bells of St. Mary's" on this programme. Let's hope it comes to pass. Doubtless, all of these STARS ON SUNDAY spots were recorded at the same time.

On Sept. 16 BBC Radio 2 began a series called THE SONGWRITERS introduced by Peter Clayton. First to be presented was joint-composer of many of Bing's film songs, Jimm Van Heusen. I found him to be disenchantingly egotistical and interested waned rapidly when he began to eulogise on the great merit of Frank Sinatra as an interpreter of his songs. For the record, however, Bing tracks played were "Its The Dreamer in Me", "Moonlight Becomes You" and "Swinging on a Star".

Possibly of more perceptive interest is the series which, as I write, has just begun on Radio 3 at 12.55pm entitled "Alistair Cooke's....." with the name of the chosen popular composer completing the title. This will be a series of nine programmes beginning with the great Irving Berlin. Bing was featured in anecdote and song in satisfying fashion. We know that Alistair Cook,who wrote the sleeve notes for the LP "That's What Life Is All About", is no mean Bing fan.

"The New Paul Whiteman Orchestra" has had some airings lately dispensing some truly excellent representations of early Bing-Bix recordings based exactly on the original arrangements. Oct. 24 had the programme entitled BIX BEIDERBECK and the King of Jazz. Whilst the programme dealt chiefly with the free-wheeling cornetist of Whiteman's organisation (and other bands) there had to be passing references to Bing - inevitable when such vocal tracks as "There Ain't No Sweet Man","Tain't So, Honey" and "Louisiana" were being re-created. Richard Sudhalter, who wrote the book on Bix, sits in as Bix, and Chris Ellis - a knowledgeable sleeve writer and vintage record compiler, mainly for WORLD RECORDS - sings the"Bing" vocals. Very pleasantly but with no attempt to imitate Bing. Perhaps the interest this orchestra engenders will create a hackwash for the originals!

LETTER IN THE LONDON "EVENING NEWS" 20.8.75: "YOU'RE STILL TOPS, BING".

I have read with interest various claims regarding who the greatest popular music singers are today. Your readers should listen to Bing Crosby's new single, THAT'S WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT and learn how the newer fellows should perform to reach the pinnacle of popular music.

D.A.Barker, Rockfield Rd. Oxted.

Does anybody know Mr. Barker?

Item in a provincial paper: BING'S £1,000 THANKS.....Bing Crosby has given the people of a little English village something to sing about. The 74-year-old star so enjoyed his shooting holiday in Yorkshire recently that he has now given a £1,000 cheque to help the playing field fund at Kirkby Malzeard, near. Ripon.

The cheque was Bing's fee from a TV company. Bing was the guest of landowner Godfrey Bostock at his shooting lodge on the moors nearby. Mr. Bostock said: 'It was a most generous gesture by a charming man.'

ANSWERS TO QUIZ: Printed upside-down deliberately - in case you read the magazine back to front!

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1. Old Masters, Vols. 1, 2 and 3.
   The Early 30s, Vols. 1 and 2.
   Bing & The Dixieland Bands.
   Beloved Hymns.
   Bing in Paris.
   Man Without a Country &c.
   Rare Style.
   Among my Souvenirs.
   Bing Sings for Children.
2. Warner WMB122: BING ON THE HAPPY SIDE. It was a showbiz paper comment in 1929.
3. Victor Young.
4. United Artists (of course!) Pickwick International; Daybreak (Polydor), Reprise; Longtines.
5. 1955 - Christmas Eve, to be exact.
6. Cole Porter; Merle Oberon remarked this to Bing and he subsequently recorded Begin the Beguine and other Porter numbers. Yet, he recorded "I Never Realised" in 1936!
7. Neither; its on WHITE CHRISTMAS.album.
8. Mitzi Gaynor.
9. Jimmy Dorsey's Orchestra; Frances Langford and Louis Armstrong.
10. MERRY CHRISTMAS!
11. "Sunday, Monday or Always/If you Please/Oh What a Beautiful Morning/People Will Say We're in Love.
12. 1942; with Bob Crosby and his Orchestra.
13. May be at home; not on record!
14. Yes, all the "First" four, e.g. Gary, Philip, Dennis and Lindsay on A CROSBY CHRISTMAS in 1950.

BING A "LONER"? Well, maybe. If it means he goes around without a Mafia-like bodyguard to keep his fans at bay..which he does, of course.

Also from the EVENING NEWS re. the Vera Lynn TV show: "...he looks a little thinner but his voice has lost none of its charm. He still sings with impeccable timing. He, too, knows more than a bit about sentiment. He sang about ups and downs that he said looking us straight in the eye is what life is all about. I am not keen on entertainers who pretend to be philosophers with a message. But the great ones get away with it - and Bing did.

As for their voices, Bing cleverly attempts no more than he knows he can achieve...Vera is still as forceful as ever. Still capable of drowning the rattle of a thousand NAAFI mugs."

Not all the stories of Bing's visit got into the National press - there was a delightful incident in Sunningdale when Bing and Bob met again a couple whose wedding they had "gate-crashed" in 1952!They had been playing golf with a friend who suddenly decided to take them along to the wedding, and not unnaturally, they "stole the show"!.. A reunion was arranged with the couple, Tom and Joyce Boardman and Bing and Bob happily took up the photograph positions in 1975 of those they stood in for in 1952! Pictures appeared in the local papers and all four certainly looked as good this year as they did in 1952 - if not better!

7. To which Bing film does the following review refer? "Bing Crosby is the star. Make no mistake about it. The 'Blue of the Night' boy is a picture personality, as he demonstrated in his two-reelers. He has a camera face and a camera presence. Always at ease, he troupes like a veteran."
8. If PENNIES FROM HEAVEN was not a Paramount Picture, which company released it?

Answers: WHITE CHRISTMAS (after all, its that time of the year again!) 2. Bob Hope - it just had to be! 3. ROAD TO HONG KONG, Review appeared in FILMS & FILMING. 4. Both were featured on LUX RADIO THEATRE BROADCASTS: SHE LOVES ME NOT was aired on Nov. 8, 1937 and the entire show, which runs for one hour, is available on TOTEM LP1004. The DIXIE broadcast, which featured Bing and Dorothy Lamour in their original film roles, was heard on Dec. 20, 1943. These broadcasts, although sponsored by the famous toilet soap manufacturers, relied on Paramount Pictures talent. They were studio assignments with Cecil B. Demille acting as producer, director and overall supervisor. DeMille received an annual income of 100,000 dollars for heading these slick Lux Theatre shows until 1944. Then he refused to pay the 1 dollar membership levy demanded by the American Federation of Radio Arists, a stance which forced him out of the radio medium. 5. Anthony Quinn - his appearance in WAIKIKI WEDDING was significant in that it started him on the road to stardom. Director Frank Tuttle persuaded him to play the small character part of Kimo in the film by admitting that his screen time amounted to little but that his exposure in a Crosby film would bring him to the attention of a vast public. Altho' Quinn earned only 2,000 dollars for ten weeks work on the project his subsequent Paramount contract was offered on the basis of his unsympathetic role in the film. 6. Five over three years for 300,000 dollars. 7. THE BIG BROADCAST. Review appeared in the New York American. 8. Columbia Pictures. Its an oddity because it is sandwiched between 13 Paramount movies. The reason for this is equally odd. By early 1935 Paramount studio politics had swung the balance of power from then operating chief Emanual Cohen to film director Ernst Lubitsch. Cohen then set up an independent unit, Major Pictures, which used Paramount studio facilities. Columbia offered financial benefits if they could release PENNIES FROM HEAVEN and the highest bidder won.

TRADING POST

Barry Freestone, 5, Glanville Rd. Blenheim Gardens, Brixton Hill, LONDON, S.W.2, says:
WANTED: 1. BING'S HOLLYWOOD 1; WHITE CHRISTMAS (LAT 8044); 3 The Second Time Around (45 rpm); 4 Road to Hong Kong, 45rpm. Will offer £8 each for the LPs and £1 each for the singles. Also wanted many 78s from 1932 to 1937 period. (Golly, £8 - that's inflation!)

Edward Sturrup, 3 Griffin Way, Sunbury on Thames, Midd'x: I have been endeavouring to purchase the "pirate" recording with a photo of Bing and William Boyd on the sleeve, but even Harlequin in Compton St. Soho are out of stock! Anyone help please?

Bert Morton, 22 The Pavement, Brewood, Stafford, ST19 9BZ has the following 78s &c. for offer..."I would prefer to trade them for any of the Bing 8 x 10 photographs that the Crosby office has sent out over the years....none of them are particularly rare." - Brunswicks: 1182 Many Happy Returns of the Day/At Your Command. 0205X Adeste Fidelis/Silent Night; 02681 Laugh and Call it Love/I've Got a Pocketful of Dreams; 02806 My Melancholy Baby/Just one more Chance; 03044 Marcheta/Sierra Sue; 03382 Easter Parade/Abraham; 03647 I love You/Strange Music; 03396 Be Honest with Me/It Must be True;03485 If you Please/Sunday, Monday, or Always; 03534 Swinging on a Star/Going My Way; 03569 As-cent-chu-ate The Positive/There's a Fellow...; 03596 Out of this world/June Comes Around Every Year; 03618 Its Been a Long, Long Time/Whose Dream are You?; 03624 Symphony/I Can't Begin to Tell you; 03635 I'll Take You Home Again Kathleen/Bells of St. Mary's. 03636 Aren't You Glad You're You/In the Land of Beginning Again; 03650 On The Atcheson Topeka and Santa Fe/I'd Rather be Me; 03699 Jingle Bells/Santa Claus is Coming to Town. 03708 Oh What a Beautiful Morning/People Will say We're in Love; 03753 Dear old Donegal/McNamara's Band; 03783 Spaniard that Blighted My Life/Alexander's Ragtime Band; 03801 Country Style/As Long as I'm Dreaming; 03837 You Don't Have to Know the Language/Apalachicola Fla.; 03882 Galway Bay/My Girl's An Irish Girl; 03902 Whiffenpoof Song/Kentucky Babe; 03932 Kiss in Your Eyes/Friendly Mountains; 04119 After You've Gone/Blue; 04420 Mule Train/Dear Hearts & Gentle People; 04454 Have I Told You../Quicksilver; 04482 Sunshine Cake/Horse Told Me; 04606 Marshmallow World/All my Love; 04613 High on the List/

Life is so Peculiar; 04622 And You'll be Home/Accidents Will happen; 04760 Cool, Cool, of the Evening/Misto Christofo Columbo; 04781 Gone Fishing/Moonlight Bay; 04838 Its Beginning to Look Like Christmas/Christmas in Killarney; 04900 Isle of Innisfree/ At Last! At Last; 05304 Back in the old Routine/If There's Anybody Here; 05558 Sleepy Time Gal/No Other Love; 05585 Swanee/Honeysuckle Rose; AM Decca 1234 My Little Buckeroo/What is Love; Am.Decca 40000 Road to Morroco/Put It there Pal, and Joker SM 3053 THE JAZZIN' BING CROSBY, and Brunswick LA 8529 El Bingo.

A LONG-DISTANCE "SHOPPER": Neil O'Brien, 4 Wychbury Street, Spreydon, Christchurch 2, NEW ZEALAND wants to purchase "HIGH TOR" LAT 8154, and SAY ONE FOR ME BBL7335.

NOEL J. MOULD whoseN. Ireland address I am witholding for reasons he will understand wants to buy a copy of BING AND THE DIXIELAND BANDS - wrote to me, Editor if you can help and I will forward.

RAY TOREY (Shirley, Croydon) has kindly sent me Nos. 28-38 incl. of BING and wants them sold for the "post" fund. Anyone interested? Contact Editor.

ANDREW RODGERS, 13 ALLAN ST. 56/10 GLASGOW G40 4TE is looking for Bing's HOLLYWOOD 3, 6, 7, 11, 12, and 15. Many other readers are, too...but if you can help! I feel that if EMI/MCA are pleased with the response to the albums they are putting out that great series may even yet be reissued.

IT IS REGRETTED THAT "THE A TO Z OF BING CROSBY" and THE BING CROSBY LPography have now been completely sold. The Mini Discography at 50p post paid remains available but very few copies. All of these will be reprinted in due course, however.

TONY BULMER (GUISEBOROUGH) tells me that Mr. Edward Heath went to meet Bing during his TOP OF THE POPS appearance...

THE INCREASE IN SUBS FROM £1.50 to £1.80 IS NOT RETROSPECTIVE, OF COURSE, AND APPLIES WHEN MEMBERS RENEW.

MR. R. SAUNDERS, 86 Gordon Rd., Harborne, Birmingham B17 9YG: Will swop Bing's SONGS I WISH I'D SUNG (American Decca) LP autographed by Bing and 10"LP BING AND KATHY ON SAFARI" for BING'S HOLLYWOOD NO.7 - if no offer, will consider selling.

MR. F.D.WATERMAN 45 Ramsey Rd., Dovercourt, Harwich, Essex has lost some very treasured records thro' an accident and is desperate to replace them: THE SECOND TIME AROUND/BUT BEAUTIFUL/ONCE AND FOR ALWAYS/THE KISS IN YOUR EYES/HOW SOON/YOU DO/COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS/ LONG AGO & FAR AWAY/I'LL BE SEEING YOU. I've told Mr. Waterman these appear on many LPs, and can be obtained fairly easily on tape but he would still like the records if possible.

For the growing number of members who are film/projecting fans JOE HALL, 13 Icarus House, British Str., Bow, LONDON E3 4LZ has told us of Perry's Movies Ltd., 129 Kingston Rd. London, SW19 1LU; Derann Film Services, Film House, 171 Stourbridge Rd. Dudley, West Midlands; and Collectors Club, 41 Mitchell St. London, EC1 3QQ as being good sources for vintage films...Joe is quite a vintage fan, apart from his Bing interest.

RON HORLOCK (Gillingham) points out that in the last CELLULOID CROSBY there were a couple of errors: GOING HOLLYWOOD was made in 1933 by MGM and not Paramount, Fredric March played the title role in the 1932 DR. JEKYLL & MR. HYDE, not Paul Muni....well, the least we can do is correct our mistakes! Thanks Ron.

MR. J. WOAD, 7, Castle Crescent, Thornhill, Dewsbury, West Yorks, WF12 0EH has BING'S HOLLYWOOD no. 14 ("SING A LITTLE SONG") mint condition £2.50 post paid, OR will exchange for WHITE CHRISTMAS LP.

Members are urged to advertise their surplus or duplicate (I cannot say "unwanted"!) Crosby records here in TRADING POST. Or any other interesting Crosbyana, for that matter. Some-one is bound to be interested and its nice, anyway, to think members are thereby maintaining contact. It will be a help if you put such items on a separate sheet and thereby ensure they will not be overlooked by a harassed Editor!

'DEED I DO and THEY ALL LAUGHED appear on a new GALA PERFORMANCE album (Polydor Select 2489 103) which also features Vera Lynn, Lynsey De Paul, James Last and others. These two numbers bid fair to be the "most issued" - from an album that has been reissued and re... issued...and....

A MESSAGE TO READERS FROM BING:

John Scott Trotter is gone. It would be hard to believe, after so many years together, if I hadn't seen his gradual decline and realised how hopeless it was for him to survive. Not because of anything he said or did, but because I knew the history of his illness.

He was cheerful up to the very end. I talked to him the night before he was to undergo his final surgery. Jovial - unafraid - always the Southern gentleman.

I never knew another man like John. A great musician, exquisite taste in everything, gentle, sensitive, great good humor always, and rigidly loyal to his friends and to his high standards and ideals. I love him.

BING.

"If you'r ready, John Scott...." gently cued Bing on so many of his radio shows as he indicated he was ready to launch another impeccable musical exercise. And John Scott was ALWAYS ready...we salute him and remember him with gratitude...Editor Reg wrote a comprehensive article on J.S.T. in the ACCOMPANIED BY .... series (BING 11 August 1968) and asked during the course of it, and after pointing out that John Scott had musically directed Bing more often on commercial records than any other , whether we could yet consider the list closed. Sadly, there will be no more new recordings of this remarkable team of Bing and John Scott Trotter.

May I, as a postscript, suggest there is now an ideal opportunity for EMI/MCA to issue an album featuring this legendary "team" in the New Year. A list that would explore many facets of John Scott's work with Bing might read as follows:

1.	The Moon Got In My Eyes.	12.7.37	1.	I'll Be Home for Christmas.	1.10.43
2.	Can I Forget You?	20.7.37	2.	Iowa.	17.7.44
3.	The Lonesome Road.	12.12.38	3.	A Friend of Yours.	19.7.44
4.	Start the Day Right.	22.6.39	4.	Country Style.	19.11.46
5.	Cynthia.	30.6.39	5.	Pretty Baby.	3.12.47
6.	The Singing Hills.	25.2.40	6.	Sorry.	16.11.49
7.	Who Calls?	23.5.41	7.	Gone Fishin'	8.6.51.
8.	Goodbye, Little Darling, Goodbye	23.5.41	8.	Keep it a Secret.	12.11.52
9.	Mandy is Two.	24.1.42	9.	Down by the Riverside.	4.11.53
10.	Skylark.	24.1.42	10.	In the good old Summertime.	21.5.54

JOHN BIGNELL.

Such a tribute, suitably sleeved, would I feel certain prove very popular both in this country and in the States - and of course, with Bing admirers everywhere else. There may be - will be! - entirely different ideas on the composition of such an album, but John Bignell's would certainly be well-worthy of consideration and covers the period excellently. This will, at least, be seen by excellent representatives of EMI/MCA.

Editor.

Now we are at the end of the final issue for this tremendous year of 1975 which as, alas, in its final stages been laid with melancholy overtones for all those who remember.....and the reader must be very young indeed not to know of John Scott Trotter..and of his contribution to the continuing legend of Bing Crosby.

But, for now we can raise a final HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL - and a bumper New Year of 1976.